

John. C. Backus

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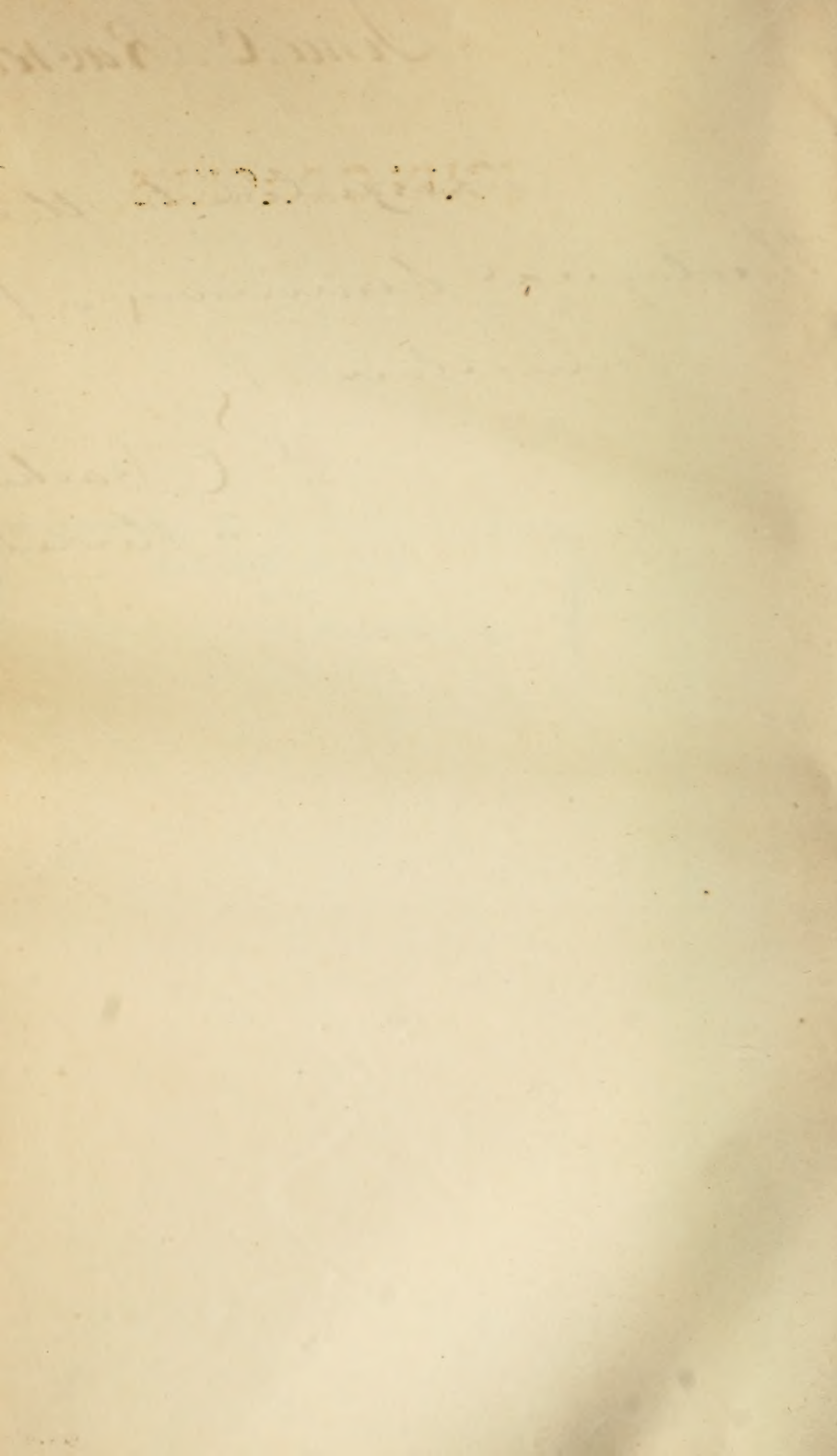
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JOHN C. BACKUS.

SIX SERMONS

ON THE

STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

LONDON :

J. MOYES, TOOK'S COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

SIX SERMONS

ON THE

STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

THEIR NATURE, INTERPRETATION, AND SOME OF THEIR MOST
IMPORTANT DOCTRINES :

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
IN THE YEARS 1827-8.

To which are annexed

TWO DISSERTATIONS :

THE FIRST ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE ORTHODOX VIEWS OF CHRISTIANITY,
AS OPPOSED TO THE RATIONALISM OF GERMANY ;

THE SECOND ON THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY GENERALLY,
WITH AN ORIGINAL EXPOSITION OF

THE BOOK OF REVELATION ;

SHEWING THAT THE WHOLE OF THAT REMARKABLE PROPHECY HAS
LONG AGO BEEN FULFILLED.

BY THE REV. S. LEE, B.D.

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HIS MAJESTY'S TOWN GAOL,
AND
PROFESSOR OF ARABIC IN THE UNIVERSITY, OF CAMBRIDGE.

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P R E F A C E.

IN presenting my reasons to the public for having undertaken and published this work, I may remark, in the first place, that it has long been my opinion, (which I persuade myself has been formed upon observation and some experience,) that the Study of the Scriptures, and hence a deep and accurate acquaintance with Theology, is in this country in a state far beneath what it ought to be; and that we have, therefore, occasionally witnessed among our Divines a want of simplicity, cordiality, and efficiency, in the discharge of their clerical duties, and of forbearance towards one another, to a considerable extent; and, in society, a lamentable disregard to the national Church, a relaxation in morality, an increase in dissent, and a prurient and insatiable desire for novel and speculative doctrines, in a degree no less extensive. There has, indeed, of late years, been considerable effort made for the purpose of meeting and remedying these evils; and, it must be confessed, the improvement effected has in every case corresponded with the efforts made. Churches have been multiplied; and, I believe, these have in every instance been well filled, and a due attachment been evinced both to Religion as by law established, and also to the Clergy, where a due anxiety has been shewn to promote the spiritual welfare of

the people. There are many things in the constitution of our national Church which must ever recommend it, and indeed insure its success and preference with the great majority of this country. The depth and soundness of its piety, in conjunction with the catholic and liberal spirit of its Articles and Liturgy, are certainly unparalleled in every other ecclesiastic institution which has yet come to my knowledge. The bright examples too of piety and learning, which have from time to time adorned its Prelacy and Priesthood, have been such as to afford proof sufficient that the system is itself worthy of all praise. There are, moreover, within its precincts, provisions made for the cultivation of sound learning, and for a truly religious education, such in extent and character as are to be found in no other: and, in every respect, I think we may say, a kind Providence has so co-operated with the wisdom of our forefathers, as to have left us in want of no requisite suited to promote His glory, and to advance the spiritual good of the millions which have been committed to our pastorship and care.

It may be doubted, however, whether our efforts have, as a nation, been at any period commensurate with these means, and particularly within the last hundred, or hundred and fifty, years. I am of opinion, that there is one subject at least, and that a very important one, to which a due attention has not been paid,—I mean the Education of the National Clergy. It shall not be my business here to dwell upon the defects which I see, or think I see, in the systems pursued; because this would, perhaps, tend more effectually to increase the evil than to remedy it. I will take for granted, what I

am sure every one acquainted with things as they are will allow, viz. that the youth sent to our Universities may reasonably be called upon to make far greater exertions than they now do, for the purpose of qualifying themselves to become ministers of religion. The studies, now generally pursued and encouraged, are those which have been termed the *Classics* and *Mathematics*; which, it must be confessed, are in themselves transcendently excellent, with the view to form a correct taste, and to train the mind to habits of close investigation and a regular train of thought. Besides, to a people great as this nation is in the arts, the sciences, in arms, commerce, wealth, influence, and every other consideration which tends to raise man in the scale of intellect and of usefulness, these pursuits are not only laudable, but necessary. They have been principally instrumental in raising us to the proud eminence which we hold among the nations; and they are still necessary to secure its maintenance. Where these can, therefore, be cultivated with prospects of success, they ought to be pursued; and the farther this is done, great, in the same proportion, will be our national reputation, enterprise, and success.

There are, however, in our Universities, large, and indeed by far the largest, numbers of students who have not, perhaps, a turn of mind adapted to these studies, an adequate end in view to insure their deep and successful cultivation, or time sufficient for distinction in these, and also to acquire a sufficient stock of information necessary for the profession for which they may have been destined. This last consideration will apply with the greatest

force to persons intended for the Church. During the time allotted to an University residence, it is quite impossible that every one can do any thing considerable in all its pursuits; and, where the tide of popular feeling runs high in favour of the Classics and Mathematics only, which is generally the case in this country, the consequence will be, that those who cannot distinguish themselves in these, will lose their energies, give up all effort with regard to every thing else, and actually abandon themselves to apathy and idleness. I will not pretend to say what the numbers among us are who are thus situated, but I am apprehensive that they are frightfully large. And, if this be the fact, surely something ought to be done, not to narrow the extent of learning now acquired by the industrious and enterprising, but to call forth those latent and dormant energies, which are languishing without an object, or exerting themselves only to produce misery or mischief.

I would not be understood, however, to argue for something which is to produce perfection in every case, or to make a consummate theologian of every candidate for holy orders. This would be to betray a weak and visionary mind, and to labour after that which is neither practical nor necessary. My only object is, to have something done where there is now either nothing or next to nothing; to accustom those destined for the Ministry of the Church to considerations, which, if they do not require the very first talents or taste to understand and appreciate, are nevertheless such as may be grievously misunderstood and misapplied; and which are confessedly of the very highest interest and importance to all. My wish is to see, not only

theological studies called for authoritatively, but considered as worthy of distinction both in the Universities and the Church. Under such circumstances, Who shall say to what height of cultivation and of usefulness they may not rise, where they are now confessedly low, inefficient, and perhaps entirely neglected? Time was, when our Doctors in Divinity were really masters of their profession; and when the names of Cranmer, Laud, Walton, Castell, Pococke, Hyde, Lightfoot, and a host of others, commanded an admiration and respect throughout Christendom, as flattering to themselves as it was beneficial to the cause of Divine truth. Learning was then respected, because it was deep and efficient; and piety, because it was sincere and simple: and the consequence has been, those days have left for the admiration, and indeed for the imitation, of the latest posterity, works which may be exceeded in simplicity, perspicuity, or force, but never excelled either in labour, erudition, or the expression of sound piety.

Enough, however, has been said on this subject, and perhaps enough to deceive the reader into the belief, that it is my object to call again into notice all the practices and studies of those days: this, it will presently be seen, however, is not the end which I have in view. I am well aware of the impracticability of every such speculation; and further, that the "steep and thorny way" which these good men trod, is not the most likely to secure all that is desirable in these times. I may be excused, however, if I venture to suggest in what respects an extended course of theological reading is likely to be beneficial among us, and then proceed to state

some of the evils of which the want of such a course has in many cases been productive.

In the first place, then, a deep and accurate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, their evidences, authority, and sanctions, cannot but have a most salutary effect on the mind of the student, and tend to keep him in an *habitual* state of assurance, that without the favour of their Divine Author, nothing is strong, holy, or valuable; that in himself there dwelleth no good thing, and that his sufficiency must be of God. With these feelings and convictions, the efforts of the student cannot but be cordial, continued, and rightly directed: his light will not only be clear, constant, and steady, but it will be placed upon a hill, and thence diffuse its necessary and cheering beams to all within the sphere of its action. In such a case, success will never be counted upon by the doctrines of human probabilities, but by a firm faith in the co-operation of the Divine assistance, which will at once secure the labourer from hopelessness, and bring an effectual blessing upon all his endeavours. In questions relating to the Church of God, human politics alone can effect nothing desirable. Here, if there be any truth in Revelation, or any such thing as a Divine Providence in the world, the favour of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, can alone afford success and prosperity: other expedients may promise much, but they will effect little; and, where the Divine aid is not sedulously and habitually sought and relied upon, nothing either stable or permanent can reasonably be expected, or actually be enjoyed.

Now, it will not perhaps be too much to affirm,

that where classical or scientific pursuits, or both, have been exclusively cultivated and encouraged, these dispositions, however they may be revered, will not be habitual to the Theologian. Sincerity he may indeed possess, and also evince a zeal for the truth, not inferior to that of purer and more primitive times; but, it will most probably be deficient in the article of dependence on Divine grace: it will generally be too much elevated by success, or depressed by disappointment; and too little disposed practically to believe, that all things shall finally work together for good to them that love God. If I am not very greatly mistaken, a deep acquaintance with the Bible tends in a marvellous degree both to humble and exalt the mind; both to soften and to warm the heart; and to make the man not more commendable for his sincerity, than admirable for his usefulness, disinterestedness, and reliance on the Divine favour: and this, I think, is what every teacher of Religion must be, whose object it is to do good in his generation, to give stability to the Church of Christ, or to be in his life and conversation acceptable even to himself; and this, I also think, a deep and habitual study of the Holy Scriptures is, humanly speaking, alone calculated to make him.

Another highly important end likely to be gained by extending our Theological studies at the Universities will be, that novel and speculative doctrines will, at an early period, be divested of those powers which are too frequently found successful in recommending them. It will now be known, that these have, at one time or other, been already advanced, considered, and refuted; and hence, that they are groundless, specious, and mischievous. There never

was a time, perhaps, in which knowledge of this sort was more wanted. A taste for speculations of this kind has of late been evinced in this country, which, however well intended it may have been, or however harmless it may have appeared in its tendency and extent, has been justly deplored by wise and good men. My opinion, which I here respectfully propose, is, that all this has been very much beside the mark; my reasons will be seen in the following sheets. The results, to which I have been led by a long, and I trust impartial, study of the Bible, have been, that it is of all books the most simple and practical; and, that even the knowledge which it affords, is of all things the most unlike that which puffeth up. And, I now say, what I would have particularly borne in mind, that this consideration has constituted my principal reason for publishing this work.

One advantage more, likely to be secured by these means, I must now be permitted to notice; and, as this involves a subject which requires to be touched with the greatest tenderness and consideration, I shall be very brief: it is this: There do unfortunately exist, at this day in the Church of England, more parties than one. The motives and conduct of both, I am, in most respects, bound to revere; and the zeal, perhaps, in all. I am apprehensive, however, that what has appeared to me a most important consideration, namely, a deep and accurate acquaintance with both the *letter* and *spirit* of the Scriptures, has not been, and is not, always, looked upon as a *most necessary qualification* for the Clergy in general. And hence I have been led to believe, that both parties have, as such, been unwa-

rily led to adopt policies, which, to say nothing of their unholy origin, are better suited to promote discord than agreement, imbecility than strength, division and distraction than unity in counsel, or effect in operation. Besides, where the mind is fully occupied in the cultivation of useful and necessary knowledge, (and this the most learned of us will need to the very end of his existence,) and where the affections are engaged in the furtherance of every good work, which such a schooling and course is most likely to insure, there will be but few opportunities or energies left for the encouragement of feelings or of measures, which have hitherto been so fruitful in multiplying discord, and producing dissatisfaction. It is not, however, for me to suggest how such measures as those here recommended may best be carried into effect. This I leave to others who have better means, greater experience, and opportunities more favourable for bringing about *a consummation so devoutly to be wished*.* My princi-

* Since this was written, a very able sermon on this subject, preached before our University at its last commencement, by Dr. Adams of Sidney College, has fallen into my hands, the piety, energy, and reasoning, of which cannot, I am sure, be too much commended. Dr. Adams has, in an Appendix, pointed out what he deems to be most likely to bring about the objects he has in view. I would only suggest, what I know has for some time been thought advisable by a considerable part of the sister University; namely, that as students now come to Alma Mater at an age much more advanced than they did formerly, whether the previous examination would not be more effective if held in the first term after admission, than it would at any subsequent period. This would have the salutary effect of bringing men to the University sufficiently stocked with Latin, Greek, &c. to make it something besides a bad grammar-school, as in many instances it is now compelled to be; and also, to make schoolmasters in general more

pal object here, is to urge the desirableness, the practicability, and the good tendency, of the end had in view; and which, I think I may say, is not less in unison with the statutes of our Universities in general, and of our Colleges in particular, than it is *necessary* for the welfare of our Church and nation.*

Having touched so far upon the advantages likely to be derived from a more extended cultivation of Theology in our Universities, we may now offer a few considerations on the evils which have been felt, in consequence of its partial or entire

alive to the duty of sending out more than *one* or *two men* in a year, tolerably prepared for our public examinations. If this were done, considerable and, perhaps, sufficient time would be gained during the four years required for the degree of B.A., for the exclusive study of divinity among those destined for the Church.

* Not only do the statutes of our Colleges generally provide, that their societies should cultivate Theology, but in many instances a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures is made necessary for the admission of their Fellows; and, in others, Hebrew lectureships have actually been established, which have unhappily degenerated into sinecures. The statutes of the Universities, too, require, that candidates for the degree of Bachelor in Divinity shall study the original Scriptures; and, to meet this, Hebrew and Arabic professorships have been established, which have been either converted into sinecures, or have been almost entirely neglected. During the last eleven years, in which I have had the honour, and I will say the pleasure, of being permitted to perform the duties of both these offices at Cambridge, my endeavours have proved much more successful than I had any right to expect, while they have met with far less encouragement than might have been justly calculated upon. But, omitting these questions, and even the decisions of conscience as to duty, from which, perhaps, there can be no appeal, it is most probable, under God, that a recurrence to these studies will meet in a most effectual manner, a very great proportion of the evils by which we are now threatened, and to which we are exposed; and my belief is, that every other human effort will fail of effecting this.

neglect. I will not here declaim indiscriminately on the general want of Scriptural learning which has prevailed in every age of the Church, but will proceed to shew, how this has actually manifested itself in some of its periods. It will be unnecessary to say much on this subject with reference to the Apostolic times, because miracle then supplied what can now be secured only by labour and industry. Yet even then, we find an attention *to reading* and *to doctrine* recommended, with as much earnestness as that *to exhortation* is,* a circumstance not often witnessed in modern times. But to pass on, and to come to the Fathers of the Church.—Here, I think, we may safely affirm, that, excepting a few very brilliant examples of profane and sacred erudition,† the Fathers were not generally mighty in the Scriptures. Their virtues consisted, for the most part, in warmth of feeling, acuteness of discernment, and a laudable zeal for the furtherance of religious truth. In some few instances, indeed, they inclined to the philosophical systems of the heathen;‡ in all they were deficient in Oriental learning, and in that simplicity which is ever inseparable from an extended knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Abstract reasoning, dogmatising, and allegory, were their prevailing faults; although,

* 1 Tim. iv. 13. See Dr. Adams's Sermon, as already noticed.

† I cannot help here noticing the wonderfully correct application of Scripture in numerous instances in the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Ignatius, and in the Apostolic Fathers generally. The most perfect instances, however, with which I have yet met, are to be found in the *Præparatio* and *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius Bishop of Cæsarea, the *Epistles* and *Commentaries* of Jerome, and occasionally in the Syriac works of Ephræm Syrus.

‡ See Brucker's *Historia Philosophica Critica*, tom. iii.

it may be affirmed, that in other respects, particularly with regard to the opinions and usages of the Church in their days, they all afford information indispensable to the Divine.

If we descend to the times of the Schoolmen, we shall see the refinements, which had been introduced from the philosophers, actually eating up as a canker, all that is good and lovely in the word of truth ;—an endless and barren system of distinctions, subdistinctions, and indeed of every thing calculated to mislead the unwary, and to deceive the wise ; to remove far out of sight the mysteries and the mercies of redemption, and to make man any thing but kind, compassionate, just, and good.

At this period, however, the Divines possessed both wisdom and power sufficient to cut off every means of information which could expose them to the contempt and ridicule of the people. Their doctrinal jargon they confined to an unknown tongue ; and in this, too, they locked up the word of Scripture, on which they pretended that all their fabric of divine authority and philosophy rested. The system has now in a great degree passed away. The light of the Reformation had the happy effect of detecting the error and exposing the cheat ; while, nevertheless, a considerable part of its subtle and circuitous expedients still remained. Much of this, it must be confessed, is yet to be seen in our elder Divines, mixed indeed with piety and learning which may be the envy of any age, and which, perhaps, will never be excelled.

One might have hoped, that later times would have profited by this experience, and retained the good while they rejected the evil ; but this has, by

no means, been the case. Neither has the good always been retained, nor has the evil, in every case, been got rid of. The piety and learning of those days are, as all will attest, now seldom to be met with; while some of the refinements have not only remained, but have acquired an influence and ascendancy as baleful as they have been general, and have, therefore, produced the most lamentable consequences. I mean the metaphysical systems of Calvin and Arminius, which now divide the Established Church, no less than the Conventicles, of England. It will be idle and useless further to inquire into the origin and progress of this evil; it shall suffice at present to say, that it is difficult to conceive how generation after generation could have persisted in encumbering the Holy Scriptures with matter of this sort, and with which they certainly have not the smallest connection. What necessity there ever could have been for the introduction of any such philosophy, it is quite out of my power to say, unless it was to amuse the tardy moments of indolence, or to flatter ignorance of the lowest grade with the idea, that now at last it had arrived at the source of all knowledge—the mighty secret, and the sovereign alchymy, by which the distant wealth held out in the Bible could be turned into current gold, and be applied to immediate use,—something which would resolve the painful expectations of faith into the delights of present fruition, and enable the saint thus ideally matured and purified, to pronounce the ban of ignorance and of error upon all who had not arrived at this degree of knowledge and of assurance;—or, on the other hand, which could exterminate Provi-

dence from its own creation, reduce the means of grace to appointments unmeaning, unintelligible, and almost unnecessary, for the purpose, apparently, of elevating the ignorance of the creature into something like divine wisdom; and the infirmities with which he is encompassed, into an assumed potency, to which every hour of his existence will directly give the lie.

These, however, are not the only methods by which a want of Scriptural knowledge has been attempted to be supplied, although these have perhaps been the most prevalent. In other instances, claims have been made to the all-powerful and controlling influences of the Spirit; and, that which it was the province of industry to make its own, has been made the exclusive subject of prayer, and the rule whereby men and doctrines were to be tried, recommended, or reprobated. In all cases of this sort, reason and inquiry are necessarily out of place; a fallible, deceitful, and deceived, mind is elevated into the situation of an infallible judge; and the dupe to his own infirmities made to believe, that what he may deem to be erroneous in others, cannot but be scriptural and right in himself. It signifies but little to our purpose, under what shape this delusion has appeared, whether installed in the chair of St. Peter, recommended in the garb of the inflated Churchman, or that of the querulous Dissenter. The spirit, the delusion, is one and identically the same. Ignorance is its parent, vanity its attendant, and confusion must be its end.

From these considerations, it will appear, that it is one main duty of the teacher of others, first, by a careful and patient use of all the

accessible means of instruction, to inform himself what are, or are not, the declarations of Holy Scripture; and then, but not till then, proceed to lay open to others the whole counsel of God. Interpreters have, indeed, ever been careful not to advance too little, and, generally, have left neither passage nor particle without giving what they have believed to be its just force and meaning. I am of opinion, however, that they have abundantly erred in another respect; I mean in proposing too much: by calling in principles with which they had nothing to do, and hence proposing doctrines and opinions which seem never to have been intended, and which have, in their application, proved exceedingly injurious. They do not seem to have been aware, that instructions intended for general use must necessarily be plain, easy, obvious, and practical; or, that a book coming down from the highest antiquity would probably be of this description; nor, that such would be sufficient for all the purposes of religious teaching. They appear, on the contrary, to have imagined that, as philosophy was in itself good, the word of God, which is also good, must necessarily be greatly recommended by its assistance; and, that what seemed, under some views, to elude the grasp of the most acute, could never be too much divided, subdivided, refined upon and explained, in order the more successfully to enforce the amazing sublimity of its precepts, and the unfathomable mysteries of its doctrines. It has occurred to me, however, (whether right or wrong others must judge,) that this was all either beside or beyond the mark, and that *Divine authority*, such as the Scriptures really possess, proposing,

as it does, precepts for instruction, with the promises of pardon and of every blessing in its several means of grace for encouragement, is as much more cogent, intelligible, and efficient, as the authority of God can be supposed to be superior to that of man. The full and mature grapes of our Eshcol, as Bacon has well remarked, require but the gentlest pressure in order to produce the wines which shall be in the greatest variety and of the richest flavour; and the truth is, that whenever more has been wrung out of them, the result has been any thing but that which was to gladden the heart of man, or the fatness of the vintage to cherish and support him.

But, independent of this reasoning, it has long been my conviction, that the character of our Scriptures is thus simple, easy, and efficient. I have been unable to find in them the wire-drawn theories either of some of the Fathers, the Schoolmen, Calvin, or Arminius. My belief is (and I have taken some pains to inform myself of its justness), that they proceed on principles totally different; and are as much easier of interpretation as they are practical and encouraging; and no less worthy of their Divine Author, than they are comprehensive and beneficial with regard to man. These views the reader will find advanced and discussed throughout the Sermons, and the first part of the first Dissertation.*

* The Sermons have undergone some slight alterations since they were delivered.—Dissertations were had recourse to, because notes are seldom read, and have the additional inconvenience of continually breaking the thread of discourse; besides, as I had an ulterior object in view, notes would not have been sufficiently connected for my purpose.

My principal object in these has been to recommend the study of the Scriptures, and to urge the authority, the reasonableness, and the applicability of their precepts and provisions of grace, and carefully to exclude that with which they seem to have nothing to do.

In this part of my work will also be found some remarks on a recent publication by Dr. Whateley, entitled “The Difficulties, &c. of St. Paul.” My business, in this case, has been to correct what I conceived to be erroneous views on the nature and permanency of the Moral Law of Moses, and of the obligations of the Christian Sabbath. The views of Dr. Whateley are, that the Moral Law is now no longer binding; and, consequently, that the precept to keep the Sabbath day holy, as contained in the fourth commandment, can exercise no influence upon Christians. My opinion is, that Dr. Whateley has suffered himself to be misled on these questions; my reasons will be seen in the place referred to. I may now say, that notwithstanding the objections I have to make to this part of Dr. Whateley’s book, I must be allowed to offer my testimony in general, that this work, like every other proceeding from his pen, is highly worthy of the attention of the theological student. If my views of the obligation of the Christian Sabbath are as just as I have reason to believe they are original (though not new), it will appear that the Christians of the first ages of the Church did not, as some will have it, arrogate to themselves a usage which belonged to none but Jews; but were bound by a law which even now is binding on all.*

* It should be observed, that the citations made by me are taken from the first edition of Dr. Whateley’s work. I have examined

I have, however, had other objects in view, in the publication before us, which I now proceed to state :—

There has always existed in this country and elsewhere (and particularly of late in Germany,) a considerable number who have loudly objected to what has been termed the *Orthodox view* of the Holy Scriptures, and have thence proceeded entirely to deny the peculiar doctrines thus derived and recommended. That these objections might not in some few instances have been well founded, I will not take upon me to deny, because I believe, Divines have in many cases, as noticed above, made out *too much*. Before I could take upon me to refute such objections, it was necessary I should state generally what I believed to be the true intention of the Scriptures in these respects. I mean with regard to those doctrines which are peculiar to Christianity, and which I believe to be quite necessary to salvation. The body of men which I have had principally in view is, the school of Divines most numerous at this day in Germany. The Rev. H. I. Rose, of Trinity College, Cambridge, has already brought this subject before the public; but, as he has discussed it on grounds very different from those which I have taken, there is not much probability his question will be interfered with in the following pages. The object of Mr. Rose has chiefly been to point out the causes which seem to have led to this departure from the views and principles of the Reformers; but here he has found an opponent in

the second; but, as I found no material difference, notwithstanding the additional matter on the Sabbath, I have made no alteration, either in my text or references, since my article was first written.

the learned Professor of Hebrew at Oxford. Both these able writers, however, acknowledge and lament the state of things alluded to; and therefore, although they differ in some respects in detail, they are unanimous on the great and main question; viz. that the doctrines of this school are heterodox and false. My object has been to investigate the principles on which these tenets are generally advanced, and to examine some of their results in detail; because it is my belief that the main question rests here. Objections loud and vehement may eternally be made to the formularies of faith composed by men; and the same may be done with regard to the wisest and best hierarchy. But, if we can establish the previous question, and shew that our views of the Scriptures are just, while those of our opponents are false, we shall arrive at conclusions at once cogent and decisive, that both our divinity is in the main right, and our Church founded on the doctrines of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

The authors I have selected for review on this occasion are, Dr. Wegscheider of the University of Halle, Dr. Rosenmüller of Leipsic, Professor Bertholdt of Erlangen, and Dr. Wm. Gesenius the Hebrew Professor of Halle. And here I wish it to be clearly understood, that I have nothing whatever to advance against either the industry, the learning, the good faith, or the public or private virtues, of these gentlemen. I can very cordially allow, that they are excellent and deserving men; and, further, that their intention may be to advance the truth. With the first three I have no

personal acquaintance ; with the last I have had a literary and friendly intercourse for some years ; and I will here say, he is a person for whom I entertain the greatest respect, and one to whom I am indebted for the highest distinction his University could bestow upon me.* I am, indeed, sorry that we differ so widely on points of so much importance as those discussed in the following pages are ; but, as I presume I have good reasons for the difference evinced on my part, I cannot perhaps more effectually fulfil the office of a friend, than by publicly bringing these to his notice. He has publicly, and with much earnestness and erudition, proposed his ; I now publicly, and, I trust, without insult or ostentation, propose mine, with this sentiment (to which I am sure he will subscribe), that where truth, and that too involving matters of such moment as those here discussed, is the object solely had in view, the literary reputation of the combatants need not be thought about.

The last subject dwelt upon in the following pages (and my main question is Scriptural interpretation) is, that of prophecy. The principal cause of my entering on this difficult and interesting sub-

* A diploma conferring the degree of Doctor in Divinity in the year 1822, which, as it was bestowed unsolicited and in the handsomest manner, I shall never cease to consider one of the greatest distinctions of my life. This, however, great as I esteem it, cannot (nor was it ever intended to do so) be considered as reason sufficient to impose silence on me in questions of this momentous nature. The inquiry I consider as one in which truth alone ought to be had in view. This I certainly have in view ; and I trust my friend has also.

ject has been the circumstance, that for the last five or six years much inquiry has been made on it in this country, without perhaps arriving at any very satisfactory results. I do not here, however, present myself in the shape of a controversialist generally, although a few notes to this effect will be found in my work; nor am I vain enough to suppose, that any thing or all I might advance is likely to set at rest a question of so much interest and difficulty as this confessedly is. My main object has been, to investigate the principles of prophetic interpretation, and to divest the question generally of considerations, which have appeared to me to throw great difficulties in the inquirer's way. On this subject, as on those already noticed, my opinion is, that *too much* has generally been advanced by commentators—that they have entangled themselves with questions foreign to the subject,—and hence, by viewing simple matters through an unsteady medium, have unwarily involved themselves and their readers in unnecessary and almost endless difficulties.

One would imagine, at first sight, that the Prophets would be as simple and unsophisticated in their declarations, as either the Evangelists or the Apostles are; and, that both metaphysics and duplicity would be as far removed from their discourses as could possibly be supposed. They constituted part of a nation remarkable for its simplicity, and of a people who were generally ignorant of the sciences; and, as they spoke for the use and edification of ages, to consist of high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, it is most reason-

able to suppose they would deliver themselves in a manner most likely to be understood by all. Figurative they are, indeed, to a very high degree ; but herein consists one of the greatest marks of their simplicity. Their figures are invariably drawn from nature, and are therefore familiar to all ; and, if a few of them must be confined to their peculiar polity and times, we have abundant means of ascertaining all the important particulars relating to them. My opinion is (and this has been formed upon an experience of some extent and duration), that they are thus natural, simple, unaffected, and unsophisticated ; that they speak to plain men under common circumstances ; and are, in general, as easy to be understood as the Evangelists and Apostles. Besides, we have in the New Testament a most sure and valuable key to their intentions in general ; and, if my notions on this subject are correct, the New Testament will supply much more towards their just interpretation, than has generally been imagined by the commentators.

With these views and principles, then, I have invariably proceeded : the results I have arrived at (some of which I must confess were not anticipated by me) will be seen in the following sheets. I only entreat they may be considered with the intention and spirit with which they have been proposed, and entirely and solely with reference to THE TRUTH. To my Exposition of the book of the Revelation, I suppose the loudest objections will be made ; not, perhaps, because what I may have advanced will be considered in itself objectionable, but because, as that book has been made the subject of almost

endless comment and speculation, few are to be found, who have not already made up their minds upon it, at least in a way opposed to my conclusions.

I may now advert to two or three points on which I anticipate the greatest difference of opinion. No doubt will, perhaps, be entertained on the question, that the book of Revelations must be greatly influenced in its scope, by the interpretation of those prophecies of the Old Testament to which it so frequently appeals ; and of these, those contained in the book of Daniel form a very important part. In the application of some of these, I shall not be found to differ essentially from the commentators ; in that of others, however, the differences will be found to be great and important : I will mention one, and one to which, perhaps, every other difference may be referred. In Daniel, ix. 24—27, we have a period termed *seventy weeks*, marked out and *defined* (according to my notions) by certain events, which it is predicted shall take place. These *seventy weeks* have usually been taken as designating a period of 490 years, to commence some time soon after the prediction was made, and to end in the times of our Lord. In this point of view, they have been considered as constituting a strictly chronological period, to have its commencement and end, according to this number of years as just mentioned. Great difficulties, however, have presented themselves in applying this period ; and, for my own part, I do not know of one who appears to have done this, so as to satisfy the particulars laid down in, all respects. It is very true these 490 years can be made to end at some period either in our Lord's lifetime or at his death ; but, the variety

of conclusions arrived at (arising either from the difficulty of ascertaining with precision when the period ought to commence, or how the years are to be numbered from it, when so fixed upon,) has been so great, as to leave nothing like the certainty desirable and even necessary in this case.

If the question be raised, as to why the commentators have been led to the conclusion, that this period ought to be considered as one of 490 years, it will perhaps be answered, that a day is occasionally put for a year in prophetic language; and further, that the sum thus obtained may be made to agree, to some extent, with the events given for the purpose of defining its periods and completion. It is not my intention here to question the first of these cases, which I may very well do, nor to add any thing to what has already been said respecting the last; because I have matter of much greater weight to urge, and matter, as it appears to me, very difficult to be dispensed with on that view of the question: it is this,—

In the first place, *seventy weeks* are determined as the period in which transgression is to be finished, an end made to sin, reconciliation for iniquity . . . to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy, &c.

In the next, after *sixty and two weeks* (added to *seven* others already past, making in all *sixty-nine*), Messiah is to be cut off: that is, at the end of *sixty-nine weeks* out of the *seventy*, the Messiah is to suffer. We are next told, that the people of the prince shall then come, and destroy the city and the sanctuary; and unto *the end of*

the war desolations are determined :* that is, after the Messiah had been cut off, and the city and sanctuary had also been destroyed. This must all happen after the termination of the sixty-ninth week, and before the seventieth has been completed. In the next verse we have the particulars, which are to define the period of the last, or seventieth, week of this period ; *i. e.* “He shall confirm the covenant with many for *one week* ; and in *the midst* of the week (*i. e.* of this last week) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease :” that is, at a period here termed *the midst* of the (last) week ; and, *after* the expiration of the sixty-ninth, according to the preceding verse, sacrifice was to cease, probably with the destruction of the temple and city, as there also stated. We have now, therefore, arrived at a period considerably beyond that of the lifetime of our Lord, and yet the seventy weeks are not completed. In the latter part of this verse (27) another period is intimated ; for it is said, “He shall make it desolate, even until *the consummation*, and *that determined*,† shall be poured upon the deso-

* It is remarkable that no stop is put in the common copies of our version, after the word *determined*. In the original, however, we have an important one, according to the Rabbinic authority by which our translators were generally guided. The passage would be more literally translated thus : *And upon, or near, the wing* (side, part, &c.) *of abominations a desolation* (or thing making desolate shall be), *even to consummation, and* (until the matter) *determined pour* (down) *upon the desolater*. The construction is rather obscure ; but of the general sense there can be no doubt.

† It will here be expected that I should mention my reasons for departing from other interpretations of this passage, particularly those which seem to have been most generally received. I shall,

late." With this *consummation*, therefore, the entire period of *seventy weeks* above mentioned shall, in all probability, end; and if so, we have a division or portion of the last prophetic week here spoken of, extending considerably beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, and still farther beyond the death of our Lord; at the termination of which, the *consummation determined*, or the *sealing of vision* and of *prophecy*, according to another method of stating the matter, is to happen. How long this period is to continue, circumstances alone must inform us, as it appears to me they must in every other case; because, as we have seen, the method of counting days for years, &c. will avail us nothing. How these periods have been disposed of by me will be seen in my Exposition and Concluding Remarks on the Revelations. If my views of the context are

therefore, briefly touch upon those of Mr. Mede and Mr. Faber. I will not enter specifically on Mr. Mede's interpretation: it must suffice to say that I object generally, first, to his translation of the passage in question, and secondly, to the system of refining to which he has had recourse; although I have no particular objection to the manner in which he has taken the several divisions of this whole period. See his Tract on "Daniel's Weekes." My first objections to Mr. Faber's view of this period are against his translation of the passage; and beyond these I shall not now proceed. This translation is to be found in chap. iv. of his Dissertation on this prophecy. In verse 24, he has, "*to seal THE vision and THE prophet.*" In the original, however, we have *חזון ונביא vision and prophet* generally, without any definite article (*the*). To verse 25 I may make some further objections; but I pass on, because our general interpretation will stand unaffected in this place. In verse 26, I object to "*the anointed one shall cut off by divorce,*" &c.; because no mention of *divorce* occurs in the original; because it is most unnatural to take *יכרת* as an active verb here; because

just, the whole period of seventy weeks marked out for the consummation, &c. cannot be measured by the sum of four hundred and ninety years; and, as I can see no good reason why recourse should ever have been had to that method of computation, I must conclude, that I believe that view of the subject to be untenable. I do not mean to infer, however, from this, that prophecy acknowledges no chronological periods. The duration of the Israelites both in Egypt and Babylon is marked by a strict chronological period; but, I argue, we are not at liberty to infer that, because those periods were chronological, this is strictly chronological likewise; unless, indeed, the circumstances of the context would justify us in doing so, which I have shewn is not the case here.

“so that they shall be no more his” can by no ingenuity be fairly extracted from the words **וְאֵין לוֹ**; and because **וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ** is most unnaturally and unwarrantably separated from the following context. In the next place, for the purpose of softening down the abruptness thus introduced, the word *for* is given, without any authority whatever in the original for doing so. I must also object to the translation of **יִשְׁחָתוּ** by “*shall act corruptly*,” because the following context clearly requires a different rendering. I pass over some minor considerations, because I wish to be brief, and come to verse 27. Here we have, “*and in half a week*,” for **וְחִצֵּי הַשָּׁבוּעַ**, which is most objectionable; because we have the definite article (**הַ**) in the original, manifestly referring back to the preceding context, but here translated by the indefinite *a*, and introduced for the purpose of disjointing this from the preceding context. One great fault, I think, in the works both of Mr. Mede and Mr. Faber is, their separating God’s judgments, as inflicted upon the Jews, from those constantly foretold in the same context to be inflicted upon the nations. See Matt. xxiv. 6—35, &c. It will not be necessary to say any thing more on this subject now.

I contend, for similar reasons, that the *thousand years*, or *millennium*, of the Revelations, is not a strict chronological period :* that it is not necessary to suppose it to be so, the symbolical character of the context is perhaps argument sufficient ; and, that it is impossible to make it so, the just and natural interpretation of the Scriptures to which it refers seems abundantly to prove. My opinion is (and my reasons will be seen in the Exposition and Concluding Remarks), that by this term is meant, that *first division of the seventieth prophetic week already mentioned*, in which the Gospel was to be preached, and the Church erected chiefly by the instrumentality of the Apostles ; and, that by *the time of the end*, the *consummation*, &c. is meant that *other period*, which occurred between the termination of this first, and the final establishment of the Christian Church, and in which *the wars, earthquakes, persecutions*, &c. predicted by our Lord and the Prophets actually took place ; and, at the conclusion of which, the legitimate objects of our Scriptural prophecies had all been secured.

Another principle, and one on which I lay the greatest stress in this case is, the interpretation of Scripture by Scripture, and to which, I am of opinion, as already remarked, sufficient attention has not been paid. In this, I think I find the periods already noticed ; and indeed every thing else contained in this interesting portion of Scripture, marked out, defined, and limited, in such a

* I am of opinion, that if this had occurred to Grotius or Hammond, the book of Revelations would have been satisfactorily explained long ago.

manner as to leave no possible doubt as to its object and end; and to afford a very strong presumption that the views here proposed are correct in the main. That I have been so fortunate as to succeed in *every* particular of Scriptural application, I will not affirm.* To expect I should perfectly succeed where every one else has, since the first ages of the Church, utterly failed, would be to evince a mind as ill acquainted with itself as with the difficulties of this subject; but, if I have succeeded in discussing and applying for the first time principles, which, when matured by further investigation, may tend eventually to unravel every particular of this interesting portion of Scripture, I shall have the pleasure to reflect, and reason to be thankful, that I have been enabled to render so important a service to the Christian Church. The difficulties which have attended this book, and which have in many instances proved the source of much error, and indeed of much doubt, in the Church, have not, I think, hitherto received a satisfactory solution; while perhaps no good reason can be adduced to shew, that future *events* are to supply this defect. If the view I have taken of them be the just one, this book will not only appear easy, intelligible, and pointed in its declarations, but will afford the *strongest evidences to the truth of Christianity itself*, and the *best possible helps*

* I must lay a particular request upon the reader, to spare no pains in examining the passages of Scripture cited in my exposition of the Revelations; because I believe he will, by so doing, very much increase his knowledge of the bearing of this book, and of prophecy in general, and be much better qualified to judge on the nature of my results than he otherwise possibly could.

for the interpretation of prophecy in general. Two considerations naturally arising out of my view of this prophecy will, I have reason to expect, be made the subject of heavy censure, and perhaps of abuse, with many. One is, I have not been able to find any mention either of the Pope or of Popery; the other, a belief that the whole of the prophetic Scriptures has long ago been fulfilled. My answer to both of these charges must be: I have had neither point to gain nor hypothesis to serve in these matters. I was naturally led to my conclusions by the operation of my principles upon the text of Scripture, without any endeavour or even expectation on my part to come to such results. If, however, my conclusions should prove to be just, I do not think we shall have much to lament on this score. The views alluded to (and which may now possibly become superannuated) have had the trial of a considerably long period, and yet they have produced no useful results to the cause of truth: and, if I may be allowed to offer an opinion, I should say, they have been the causes of great and lamentable evils; the one in keeping up an irritating and unchristian state of feeling, without at the same time offering instruction likely to be accepted; the other in affording an almost inexhaustible source for the most rash and most unprofitable theological speculations.

The quotations occasionally introduced from the Fathers have proved a great source of interest, and indeed of astonishment, with me: they have seemed to assure me, that in the earlier days of the Church the views here proposed on the Revelations were

those very generally, if not universally, held. If so, the sneer of Gibbon* will in future lose all its point; the Book itself will be vindicated, as to the place it has ever held in the Canon; and the Fathers will be found to have known much more on this interesting subject, than either Mr. Gibbon or his abettors have known themselves or been pleased to allow to others. Justin Martyr and Irenæus have fallen particularly under the lash of this elegant and acute infidel writer. I will not say that the Fathers are in every respect perfect models of Scriptural interpretation; but I will affirm, that it will be difficult to suggest to the notice of the theological student, writers in many respects so truly valuable, and from whom he will reap so much real benefit. The latter (Irenæus) has, I believe, been misunderstood and misrepresented, as I have shewn in my Exposition; and if so, what he is said to have received from ancient and apostolic persons will be allowed to have its due weight with those, who are more anxious for the furtherance of Divine truth, than for the perpetuity of the sneers of an elegant but mistaken sceptic.

I will only add, in conclusion, that I have not purposely neglected the views of others on this interesting portion of Holy Writ. If indeed I have not occasionally mentioned them, the reason has been, I have had neither leisure nor space to review their several bearings; besides, I was less willing to appear in the shape of a controversialist than of an inquirer. It is infinitely more congenial to my feel-

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i. chap. 15.

ings, and, I trust, more useful, to endeavour to point out what is right, than perpetually to be dwelling on what I may suppose to be wrong. To the temperate remarks of all on these subjects I shall lend a very willing ear, and shall be ready to give up the views I now hold on them, when good proof of their unsoundness shall have been made out.

S E R M O N S.

SERMON I.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.—2 Tim. ii. 15.

IF we can suppose a Revelation ever to have been made for the instruction of man, we must of necessity suppose it to have been such as would be suited to his capacities and wants. Man, characterised as he now is, must eventually be regulated both in his thoughts and his actions by the decisions of his reason : and this, independent of other considerations, must have continued his sole instructor ; but, upon supposing some positive law to have been revealed from above, that which was once his only instructor, would now become his monitor, his counsellor, his guide ; not for the purpose, indeed, of assuming a sovereign and uncontrollable sway over him, but of suggesting from the declarations of such superior law, what he ought to choose and to adopt as good, and what, on the other hand, he ought to reject and abhor as evil. This is, perhaps, indisputable.

We may now suppose, therefore, that man is, in addition to his reasoning faculties, in possession also of a law capable of affording the instruction of which he once stood in need : and, for the sake of divesting our question of all the difficulties possible, we will suppose this law to have been delivered in terms the most easy, and to have been illustrated by examples the most familiar ; for such truly ought a law to be which has been intended to be available to all.—And we make no hesitation in affirming, that of this character our Revelation, or the *word of truth* mentioned in our text, really is.

It may now be supposed (what indeed has been supposed by some), that a document of this kind could never be misunderstood ; and, that such would be its plainness, that he who ran might read ; and generally, that the less effort there were made for the discovery of its intentions, the less human learning were exerted for its interpretation, the more likely should we be to arrive at its exact import. This, I say, may be supposed, and actually has been supposed by many. The circumstances, however, connected with this question, will abundantly assure us, that it is nevertheless not the fact. Learned men have, indeed, mistaken the declarations of the Scriptures times innumerable, and do still mistake them ; but then, ignorant men are subject to the same infelicity, and to a much greater degree : not to dwell on the facility of their being practised upon by the artful and designing, who may happen to be more learned than themselves. It is not, however, to the learning of the Learned that their liability to error is to be attributed ; but, on the contrary, to their ignorance. Men may possess a very considerable quantity of information scientific and literary, and yet be destitute of that which is necessary to qualify them to become good interpreters of the Scripture. They may be skilled, for example, in the languages, sciences, literature, and antiquities, of almost every people of both ancient and modern times, and still be quite ignorant of those which properly belong to our Scriptures. Furnished with these, they may set up for interpreters of this book ; and, the great probability will be, that with all this costly and splendid apparatus, they will entirely fail ; because, in this case, they may, and most probably will, apply canons of criticism to a species of literature with which they have not the most distant connection ; and the consequence may be, that conclusions will be arrived at the most distant imaginable from the intentions of the sacred writers. In this case, the learned and the unlearned will be nearly on a par : the one will be in the possession of means the most likely to lead him astray ; and the other, destitute of every thing upon which any reliance can reason-

ably be placed, will not only be exposed to every "wind of doctrine," but will probably become the dupe of his own imaginations.

That much, and essential, difference of opinion has existed on the context of the Scriptures, there can be no doubt. The fact is too notorious to admit of contradiction; and it will not, perhaps, be too much here to affirm, that *ignorance* must have been the real cause of this. To arrive at a *perfect* knowledge of every particular found in our Scripture, such, for example, as its geography, chronology, botany, mineralogy, agriculture, and the like, is perhaps both impossible and unnecessary. This may be most cordially granted. There are, however, other particulars, some involving important doctrines, and others connected with its prophetical declarations,* which are legitimate subjects of inquiry, and which certainly are capable of receiving much additional light. It may, moreover, be a question, Whether much extraneous and unnecessary matter has not been forced upon the context of Scripture; and, Whether men have not, under every form of church government, been professing to believe much which may or may not be true, but which is not to be found in the Bible; and this I am disposed to believe is the fact. It is not, however, my intention generally to accuse Christians of holding erroneous notions. I will most cordially allow, that all are conscientiously holding the truth, to the best of their knowledge; but I do doubt, whether many are not holding much more, and others much less, than the truth as it is in Jesus; and whether, in the absence of real knowledge, much that is technical and obscure has not been had recourse to. My reasons for this will presently appear.

Taking it for granted then, that additional, not new, knowledge can never be unacceptable to the true believer, and especially in these days, when so much that seems but

* The Interpretation of Prophecy will be considered at some length in the Second Dissertation of this work.

ill-grounded, to say the least of it, is so constantly and so confidently proposed, we may now proceed to inquire more particularly, in what way the declarations of our text can be applied with the greatest prospect of success.

The admonition is: “ *Study to shew thyself approved unto God,*” and so on; manifestly inculcating the necessity of *human endeavour*, in order, as it goes on to say, that the person thus addressed, namely Timothy, might shew himself “ *APPROVED unto God:*” and this in the effort of studying as a minister of Christ, truly and rightly to interpret the *word of truth*. In this case, then, as in the general concerns of life, human endeavour is plainly and positively demanded; not for the purpose, indeed, of bringing about the unhallowed event of exalting itself into any thing like an independent agent, but that the purposes of God himself might be effected, that his word may have free course and be glorified, and that the person so doing may eventually receive *his approbation*.—We shall now proceed to consider these questions in the order here observed.

To begin with the first: “ *Study,*” it is said, “ *to shew thyself....a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.*” This *studying* or *effort* we may notice in two points of view. First, as it regards the dispositions of the mind; for in these one part of the effort must lie: and secondly, as it respects those efforts of the intellectual faculties, which the terms of our text absolutely demand.

With regard, then, to the dispositions which ought to be evinced in prosecuting the study here recommended, we may affirm, that they cannot be too subdued, reverential, and dependent. A revelation from above is indeed a matter which ought not lightly to be dealt with. The word of God is a deposit too sacred to be carelessly approached, much less to be made the text-book upon which to propose theory after theory, either for the mere purpose of amusing ourselves, raising our reputation, or in any way administering to popular vanity. Nor, on the other hand, ought it to be

neglected or treated, as it sometimes is, with an inattention which leaves both the minister and his flock very much at liberty to follow their own devices, and actually to profess paganism, under the sacred name and title of Christianity. That both these dispositions have occasionally been witnessed in the Church of Christ, facts which cannot be disputed will afford the amplest proof. In the one case, the human mind, which is ever on the alert to discover some stimulant to raise either its feelings or its importance, has, without due caution and due information, occasionally committed the sin of adding to the word of truth; while, on the other, an acquiescence in the common notions of morality, or an indifference as to what may or may not be of inspired origin and authority, has also sunk the minister of Christ into the advocate of a cold and vigourless expediency, which has eventually left both himself and his hearers without hope, and without God in the world.

The next disposition, which ought carefully to be cultivated, is *an ardent and inflexible love of truth*. Whatever may be said of the reverence due to early notions, of established creeds, or those floating and varying opinions which may be termed the politics of religion, one thing is certain: Unless the teacher himself feel the truth and importance of what he has to inculcate, there can be no probability that his hearers ever will. And, it may be further affirmed, that unless he be in earnest in the pursuit of truth for himself, there is but too much reason to believe that he will never find it to any considerable or saving extent. Religious truth, it ought to be carefully remembered, does not consist in the receiving of a few, or of many, justly constructed propositions, which may either be taken up or laid down as the caprice of the moment may suggest; but, in receiving and reducing to practice and to experience those precepts and promises, which have been delivered both for the guidance of the mind and the regulation of the affections. It is not only for truths valuable and authoritative which we are here to

look, but also for those which can be realised and felt, and made to promote the honour of God and the good of man;—to afford the motive and the power to bear and to forbear;—to wait patiently for all the events and all the aids, which the word of truth has promised to bring about or to afford in our behalf;—and under no circumstances to lose our confidence in its promises, or to relax in our obedience to its commands. These are effects which nothing short of a disinterested and earnest cultivation of the truth will ever supply, and which even the Scripture itself without this will never afford; a conclusion, unhappily, to which every age of the Church, and every day of our lives, will afford the most abundant confirmation.

Next to the love of truth ought to be cultivated *a deep humility of mind*. Human nature, how well soever it may be furnished with science or art, is still liable to mistake and error. The greatest efforts of the greatest men have come down to us, coupled with such marks of human infirmity, shortsightedness, and weakness, as to afford us an incontestable proof, that infallibility is no where to be found. Difference of powers have indeed been evinced, and still may be; still these will leave the best, as they already have done, in a situation sufficiently humiliating to assure all, that perfection is not to be expected on this side of the grave. And, if this be invariably the case (and it is so), no one will see so much cause for humility as the man, who with due reverence approaches the word of God. Because, to err here might be everlastingly fatal, not only to one but to many: nor let any one say, to what height trifling errors, as they are called, may rise in the estimation of God, or how far succeed in ruining the believer's best interests. Modesty, therefore, in proposing, and moderation in maintaining, our opinions, can never be too much insisted upon; and, although we are called upon authoritatively to contend *earnestly* for the faith once delivered to the saints, we are neither called upon to come to our conclusions

hastily; nor to hold them, when arrived at, with obstinacy, contempt, or insolence. No; these are the properties of ignorance and arrogance; they are the inseparable companions, not of him who is inspired with a love of truth, but of the candidate for popular fame, influence, and consideration; and are always first to stigmatise and to condemn what, perhaps, they have neither the ability nor the patience to consider or understand. Humility is, therefore, an indispensable requisite to the minister of Christ; and, if he have indeed to contend earnestly for the faith, he must be careful to remember, that it is his duty “*in meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves.*”*

One consideration more shall suffice on this head. The minister of Christ is bound to preserve and to inculcate the spirit of his Lord and Master: “*If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*”† And, let it be remembered, however dull of sight or heavy of hearing the world may be in other matters, they can always judge with sufficient accuracy on this; at least to such a degree as to render the endeavours of that teacher abortive, who may happen to be otherwise minded. If, in the next place, we inquire what most particularly marked the mind of Christ, we shall find that it was the deepest humility. Entitled as he was to consider himself equal with God, he nevertheless took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross:‡ and, in this respect, he left us an example that we should follow his steps.§

Let us now, in the second place, consider in what way the intellectual powers with which we have been furnished may be most effectually brought to bear in *rightly dividing the word of truth*. It is a fact, I believe, to which no objection can be made, that, however gifted any one may be by nature, there is still a necessity for instruction in one shape or other, in order to qualify him to fill any important office.

* 2 Tim. ii. 25. † Rom. viii. 9. ‡ Phil. ii. 7, 8. § 1 Peter, ii. 21.

In the lowest ranks of life, a schooling and apprenticeship at least are found to be necessary to constitute the ordinary mechanic. In the learned professions generally, no expense is spared to form the successful physician or advocate; and experience, which is the safest guide in all such matters, abundantly assures us, that without such training no good result can reasonably be expected. In all these cases then, a continued, arduous, and painful preparation, is necessary. The children of the world are wise in this respect; and to their decisions we are here compelled to bow.

Our Scriptures, the standing and permanent repositories of *the word of truth*, are, as it has already been remarked, easy in their diction, and are generally exemplified in the most intelligible manner; and so far they offer a probability of being universally understood and applied. There are, however, instances not a few, in which, if we may judge from facts, very great difficulties are to be found, such as appear to be in many cases of very considerable importance. It shall be our business now to consider in what way these have arisen; and, then to suggest how they may be most successfully met.

It should be observed, in the first place, that the languages in which our Scriptures are written have now ceased to be vernacular for many centuries; that they were spoken by people differing in their opinions, habits, laws, and governments, most widely from ourselves; and, the consequence is, modes of expression in use and well understood among them, may be taken by us in senses totally different from those in which they understood them: and this has often happened. To notice a few.—When an Oriental, using the Hebrew language or any of its kindred dialects, wishes to make a prediction, or to speak of any thing which he believes shall *certainly come to pass*, it is usual with him to enounce this, either as already taking place, or as actually done. Language of this sort will generally be understood by Europeans as containing plain narrative; and hence many and great

mistakes may arise: and such are actually found to exist.* In another case, instead of enouncing abstract opinions, the Oriental will generally enounce facts, and upon these he will reason.† These, again, may be mistaken for events: and this has often been done. In other instances, predictions will be made in the language of command; and, as no such thing is done among ourselves, the literal translation of such passages will give any thing but the intention of their authors.‡ Mistakes of this sort have frequently been made, and very great stumbling-blocks they have proved. In other cases, when they intend to accuse any one of a crime, or otherwise strongly to mark his character, their expression will often be, that they *make him such*. If, for example, they intend to apply the character of hardheartedness to any one, they will say that they *harden his heart*; of blindness, that they *blind his eyes*; and so on; many, and indeed most, of which have

* The dialects of the East so allied to the Hebrew are, the Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic, Ethiopic, Samaritan, and in a great degree the Persic. On this subject generally see my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 341—364. A remarkable instance of this kind may be found in Is. ix. 2, 3, which I would thus translate: The people who (now) walk in darkness *shall* (surely) *see* great light: (as to) the inhabitants of the land of the shadow of death, upon them *shall the light* (surely) *shine*. Thou *shalt* (surely) *multiply* the nation, *shalt thou not* (surely) *multiply the joy*? (or, according to another reading, Thou shalt surely multiply the joy to it.) They *shall* (surely) *rejoice* before thee, like the joy in harvest, as (men) exult when they divide the spoil, &c.—The passage as it now stands in our authorised version is scarcely intelligible.

† See my Hebrew Grammar, p. 352, &c. Of this character are parables generally, not to insist on innumerable instances occurring in other cases.

‡ So Eph. iv. 26: “Be ye angry, and sin not,” as taken from Ps. iv. 4, where our version has, “Stand in awe,” &c. Another very remarkable instance of this kind of diction occurs in Ps. lxxix. 22, &c., where the Psalmist is generally understood to be cursing his enemies; whereas St. Paul has cited a part of this as prophetic, in Rom. xi. 9, 10, and argued from its fulfilment. The force of these expressions seems to be; Consider the thing as done, look upon it as fulfilled; put the case, or the like. In this view, David is not uttering imprecations, but strongly inculcating the moral law and its consequences.

constantly been misunderstood and misapplied.* It has indeed generally been held, and still is, that whatever the grammatical constructions of such passages may be in the original, the same ought to be presented in the translations and given as European forms ; without stopping for one moment to consider, whether they would present the intention of the author or not ; or, whether these grammatical forms, as used by the people of the East, would not necessarily supply, in the languages of the West, sentiments totally opposed to those held by the original writers.

Another consideration, and one of great moment here, is : These ancient people were extremely simple in their notions and habits. Of speculative philosophy they do not appear to have had the least notion whatever ; and the consequence has been, as already remarked, instead of arguing from opinions as abstract notions, they generally argue from facts, events, or something or other, to which they can sensibly and demonstrably refer. Of the Almighty, indeed, they speak as of something which neither the heavens nor the heaven of heavens can contain ; and yet, they often represent Him as *the word, the angel*, or as appearing to them in the form of a man. Of his power, goodness, mercy, and truth, they speak largely ; but then, these notions are gathered, not from any inquiries into his person, properties, or attributes, considered in the abstract ; but from the *acts which he has performed*, from the *declarations of his word*, from the *mercies which he has actually shewn*, and from *his faithfulness in following up*

* Of this character are the passages in which God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart (comp. Exod. iii. 19 ; iv. 21. 1 Sam. vi. 6) ;—Isaiah to have made fat the heart of the people, and to have blinded their eyes (ch. vi. 10) ;—Jeremiah to root out, to build, plant, pull down, &c. ; and God to have deceived the people (Jer. i. 10 ; iv. 10) ; when nothing more than declarations to these effects could be meant, according to the Oriental idiom ; and this too the context manifestly requires. See my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 112—119. So our Lord is said to have *made* himself the Son of God, when his declarations only intimated that he was so. John, xix. 7.

the declarations of his will. Now, I might ask : Is it not probable, that a people so highly metaphysical as Europeans at this day are, may ascribe much of the matter found in this book, to sources of which the writers themselves never so much as once thought? Is it not even likely, that much which the later sacred writers cite, and apply purely with reference to the prior Revelation, may be mistaken for arguments drawn from the properties of the Divine mind, and then be applied in a way perfectly foreign to their intentions? This I think is likely, and it is what I believe has been constantly done. System after system has then been resorted to; and thus, what was at first plain, authoritative, and practical, has been made difficult, obscure, inconsistent, and perplexing. It would be almost endless to recount the expedients to which men have had recourse, in order, as they have supposed, to remove the difficulties in which they found themselves entangled; but which, as far as I can see, would have disappeared at once, had they taken pains to make themselves acquainted with the history and character of the authors on whom they were engaged.*

Let us now proceed to point out the means, by which these difficulties and inconsistencies may in all probability be removed. Under the schoolmen of the dark ages, this could not be expected; they do not seem to have had the least idea of the ignorance and folly which adhered to their systems. A wider field of inquiry, however, has been opened since those times; and, as we have been favoured with an almost unlimited intercourse with the East, it is now in our power thoroughly to investigate their literature, habits, and manners. But these are not the only privileges with which we have been blessed. We have also richly endowed establishments, large and valuable libraries stored with every sort of provision, in variety and abundance sufficient to satisfy the most sanguine. In addition to this, the character of the

* On this subject see the following sheets, Diss. I. sect 8, p. 35.

times in which we live imperiously call upon us for increased exertion. Infidelity and dissent do not only assail us from without, but a want of unity both in feeling and opinion within : all of which, as I believe, may be traced to one source, and to one only ; namely, the want of a deeper acquaintance with *the word of truth*. This had, indeed, a far greater influence, as every one knows, when it was less encumbered with human systems, and was better understood. The language generally held by unbelievers then was, “ *How do these Christians love one another !*” The question of later times has been, “ *Has Paganism or Christianity tended most to spread ruin, devastation, and woe, among mankind ?*” And would to God there were less ground for its application !

These being the facts of the case then, What, I may ask, are we as Churchmen, and as a Body here constituted for the purpose of promoting sound learning and religious education, bound to do ? I will take for granted, what we all know, that the study of theology has been on the decline for the last hundred years at least, in this country ; and, that at this day very little appears among us truly deserving that name. To inquire into the cause of all this would be fruitless, and perhaps vexatious. We cannot do better, therefore, than sedulously to look forward, and to redeem the time, by all the means placed within our power ; and these, I will maintain, are abundant and sufficient. I will not argue this point further, however, on the ground of expediency. I will now endeavour to apply to the conscience the dictates of higher and less disputable authority : “ *Study to shew thyself approved UNTO GOD,*” says the Apostle in our text ; and, on this ground I shall now take my stand.

What, it may be asked, in the first place, could have induced St. Paul to press this precept upon Timothy, if there was in reality no necessity for his being thus studious ? or, if, as it is the practice at this day, he thought that a mere cursory or casual perusal of the Scripture would be quite sufficient for the edification of the Church ? No one

could object to the authority of Timothy; for he had been ordained, authorised, and elevated into, a public teacher by Paul himself; and yet the Apostle seems to have thought that times would come, in which this authority would avail but little; and such times were actually witnessed. The heretics, we find, on the one hand, and the persecutors on the other, brought abundant proof to the conscience of every believer, that weapons more potent and effectual than those of the flesh ought then to be wielded; and, that the WORD OF GOD, which is the sword of the Spirit, drawn forth in all its native pointedness and force, could alone insure victory and success, and eventually bring down the approval of the Almighty. And perhaps I may now ask: Do not the times in which we live seem to intimate, that some such siftings and trials as these may at no distant period visit us? Has not something not unlike heresy already lifted its head among us, and furnished us with some of the principles, the conclusions, and indeed the feelings, which are said to have originated with a Cerinthus, or some such misguided character of antiquity? Is not infidelity, too, apparently on the increase, morality on the decline; and the respect, once supposed to be due from the lower to the higher ranks of society, every where fast wearing away? I must confess, I either see, or think I see, these things too plainly to be mistaken; and, if this be the truth, Is it too much to suppose that there must be some cause for it? We are taught, that if *they forsake God's laws, he will visit their offences with a rod and their sin with stripes*.^{*} And, does not history inform us that this actually took place? Captivity after captivity visited the sons of Israel; and the lukewarmth of the Churches of Asia succeeded in effectually removing their candlesticks.—But enough on this topic.—Repentance saved the devoted Nineveh; and repentance, such as will produce its legitimate fruits, will both save us and bring down the

* Ps. lxxxix. 30, &c.

approval and blessings of the Almighty on us. Let his approbation, then, be sought in the way which he himself has recommended, namely, by faith and perseverance in every good work generally, and by studying *rightly to divide his word* in particular. And then, if God be for us, (and in such a case we may entertain the fullest assurance that he will), who, we may ask, can be against us? If He, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, at whose commands nations and empires rise and fall, flourish and decay, condescend to become and to continue our Father and Friend, then shall we not fear, although the earth be moved, and the mountains be shaken, for we shall find that our bread shall be certain, and that our waters shall never fail. To the ministers of religion I would say, “Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewithal shall it be salted?” If the unction of the Spirit have forsaken you, and your light have been either put out or obscured; if your sun have gone down at noon, or your candle been placed under a bushel or a bed, wherewithal shall the gloom and darkness now appearing in the horizon be dispelled, or the earth be secured from the fury of the impending storm? The powers of nature will, when that shall be poured out, afford neither to you nor to your flocks any asylum. The rocks will refuse to fall upon you; the hills will never cover you. But to them who fear His name shall the Sun of righteousness indeed arise with healing in his wings; they shall find the shadow of the great rock in the weary and withering land; and their rest shall be sweet, refreshing, and constant. The arrow that flieth by day, and the pestilence which wasteth at noon, shall pass harmless over their habitations; and the destroying angel, which shall smite the first-born, disarmed by the symbols of the sacrificed Lamb, shall only wield his avenging sword, that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

SERMON II.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.—Psalm xix. 7.

It should be observed, that the words just cited form part of a context which is opposed, or rather given in addition, to some particulars preceding them: in order, therefore, to give them their full force, it will be just to notice them in this connection. This Psalm begins, then, by stating that “*The heavens declare the glory of God,*” and so on; plainly and unequivocally appealing to the works of creation in testimony of His almighty power; it next proceeds to shew, in what respects His revealed will differs from or excels the declarations thus made, either in the kind or the effects of the instruction which it has to impart.

We may here remark, that there generally appears to be in society an unnecessary disagreement on this subject, which it certainly is desirable should be reviewed and corrected. One class of interpreters is almost perpetually insisting on the necessity of cultivating and urging natural theology as the most safe, the most certain, and the most explicit. Another, that every appeal to the works of God, as witnessed in nature, is incapable of affording either instruction or encouragement, and calculated only to place us in the situation in which it left the heathen, professing to be wise, but in reality becoming fools. Both these exclusive views appear to me to savour in a high degree of party spirit—to be unreasonable—and to be contrary to the practice of the sacred writers themselves. Nothing, surely, can be more certain, than that *the heavens do declare the glory of God, and that the firmament sheweth forth his handy-work*; or, that this is repeated day after day, and night after night,—

that it is enounced in a language which none can misunderstand ; or, that this is felt and acknowledged, as far as the boundaries measured by the sun, and warmed by the effulgence and vitality of its beams, stretch out and are known. The sun is, indeed, put here as the messenger of these glorious tidings ; but then, the tidings themselves declare, that the Maker of the luminary is Lord of all ; and, if the workmanship is thus great and glorious beyond description, the Workman himself must at least be worthy of all adoration and praise : and, although the mighty scheme, with its author at its head, is such as to exceed the comprehension of a finite being, still those parts which do fall within the scope of his observation, tend abundantly to assure him, that a display of mercy and of goodness must have been among the first objects which He had in view. Partial, and, indeed, extensive misery does exist ; but this appears, for the most part, to be the consequence of fault of one sort or other in man, and no where to have been provided for systematically by the great Author of our nature. Sickness, decay, and death, cannot, it is true, be effectually provided against ; and here natural theology will entirely fail us : but then, we have other provisions made for these in the volume of our Scriptures, and these are such as to suit the whole of our wants. To the consideration of these we shall come in the sequel : we now insist only upon these striking and important truths,—that the works of God, as seen in creation, cannot but be a source of information, encouragement, and delight,—that when we find these appealed to in our Scriptures, and that they are actually in unison with the instruction there given (falling indeed considerably below it both in certainty and value), we are compelled to conclude, that the consideration cannot but be always valuable, and, in many instances, of the very highest possible importance.

On the other hand, we ought carefully to remember, that, although these things present *the truth*, they do not,

nevertheless, present this in all its light and strength ; and, that there are other considerations deserving our more immediate and more constant regard, because they are more specific, more authoritative, more certain and encouraging, more immediately binding on mankind, and better calculated to promote both the temporal and eternal interests of all. In this respect, we may affirm with the Psalmist, that “ *the testimony of the Lord is sure ;*” and beyond the assertion we shall not now proceed, reserving our proofs for a future occasion. Nor is it our intention, at present, to consider the completeness or perfection, as it is here termed, of the law of the Lord ; but rather to shew, in the first place, in what way it generally proceeds for the purpose of *making wise the simple* ; and in the second, to point out some very extensive and prevalent errors entertained on this subject.

If, then, the object of our Scriptures is to make wise *the simple*, they must necessarily lay down their instructions in a way likely to be understood and appreciated by all. And this we now propose to shew, they do. Any book, proposing to be generally and extensively useful, and intended to act as a guide to both the learned and unlearned, must necessarily ground its claims to attention on *authority*, for these reasons : It is not in the power of any to know what is, or what is not, most likely to advance the interests of all, or generally to fit man for eternity ; nor can circumstances ever be such as to make this the case. In the next place : If men are not generally qualified to determine such questions intuitively, neither are they to enter on the discussion of the several topics connected with them ; nor, as in the preceding case, can they ever be put in a situation so to do. Authority, therefore, can alone be generally appealed to ; and to this our Revelation, or what is in our text termed the law of the Lord, lays an absolute and exclusive claim. On what grounds this claim and authority rest, will be shewn hereafter ; we may now conclude, therefore, that in this respect our Scriptures are complete.

If, then, our Scriptures rest on good and intelligible grounds, How, in the next place do they proceed, to lay open their instructions? for unless they are here also plain and intelligible, they will still be unavailing to the majority. I answer: They deal in nothing recondite, abstract, or scientific; but deliver their general precepts, promises, and threats, with the simple preamble of, “*Thus saith the Lord;*” or, “*The word of the Lord came to*” such or such a prophet, “*saying,*” and so on: and, on the authority thus introduced, the message is then delivered in terms the most simple and unembarrassed possible. Every one must, I think, instantly perceive why this mode of instruction has been adopted; for, had any other been had recourse to, nothing but misconception, dispute, or mistake, could have been the consequence. Men, generally, would have soon been lost in the endless mazes of inquiry; and, what was intended to be for the instruction and good of all, would have eventually become the cause of disunion, doubt, debate, and interminable controversy: which, indeed, has usually been the case, where the Scriptures have been supposed to be of this character.

There is, however, still another and very important reason, why a book professing to teach religion should be thus authoritative and plain: it is this: True religion is necessarily of a *practical*, not of a theoretical or speculative, nature. The mind it must, indeed, inform; but then, this is not to be done for the mere purposes of curiosity; but in order to improve it,—to inform it of its high and eternal destinies,—to urge with the greatest earnestness and force the necessity of faith, obedience, humility, forbearance, charity, and of perseverance in every good affection and work; and to insist, that, if the candidate for the blessings of both time and eternity would entertain a reasonable prospect of success, he must not only abound, but must daily make advances, in these, and that this his profiting must appear to all. If, then, the mind is to be informed and enlightened,

it is that it may be raised, humbled, encouraged, checked, supported, subdued, and in every respect improved; and, for this purpose, that, where the tree has been thus planted, cultivated, pruned, and attended to, the fruit may be healthy, fair, and abundant.

Another reason why the Scriptures should be thus clear and explicit, may be collected from the circumstance, that the people to whom they were originally given, were, from first to last, simple and unsophisticated in the extreme. No one would, perhaps, ever have thought of proposing to persons so simple in their habits and unpolished in their manners as the ancient Patriarchs and Israelites were, any thing for general adoption in the shape of metaphysical or abstract reasoning; because no hope whatsoever could have been entertained, that these would be either understood or regarded: and the same may be said generally of the people of every age, down to the times in which we now live. With the Primitive Church, every thing like the dialectics was entirely unknown. They possessed nothing whatever either of the flights or refinements of Plato or Aristotle; and, if they had, nothing can be more improbable, than that a wise Creator would ever have proposed a system of faith and practice on any such grounds. And, the fact is, not a vestige of such instruction is any where to be found in our sacred volume. Let us now inquire, therefore, in what way the doctrines proposed are generally taught and enforced.

With regard to the character of the Deity, which must necessarily form a first principle in every system of religion, the usual language is, that he is the Creator and Maker of all things; that his person, wisdom, power, justice, mercy, goodness, and holiness, are eternal and perfect; and that these in their proper nature and extent, are altogether incomprehensible to us. In this point of view, He is represented as the object of fear and of love; and as such entitled to, and positively demanding, our devoted, constant, and unwearied

adoration, obedience, and praise. When, however, his fear or his love is inculcated, we are never amused with dissertations on the nature of powers infinite, of properties incomprehensible, or of nicely calculated directions and adjustments of the operations or requirements of his several attributes: we are, on the contrary, simply told, that *the Lord is a man of war*;* that he makes the winds his messengers, and his ministers the flames of fire;† that the stars in their courses fight against his enemies;‡ and, that *as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*.§ And, even when the incommunicable and unapproachable Majesty of heaven and earth deigns to reveal himself to his servants, he assumes the form, and addresses them in the character, of an angel or a man: and, what is still more remarkable, men are forbidden to inquire further into his character, or to attempt, in any way whatever, either to designate or to symbolise the being of His person, except as God the Father, the Creator of the world, or the Redeemer and Sovereign of his people.

If, then, the Deity is thus represented as the Creator and benign Sustainer of all things, his sovereignty will naturally and justly be appealed to as the source of all that is good on earth, and his providence as controlling all that is evil. Men or Angels, considered as dependent, imperfect, and therefore peccable, beings, can by such an one alone be charged with folly, sin, and defilement; and this we find constantly and invariably the case. Whether, indeed, He might not have constituted the world such as to have admitted of nothing of this sort; or, whether He might not, under all circumstances, have provided that moral evil and its consequent miseries, should never have been known, our Scriptures, like the best philosophy, never attempt to determine. They only provide for the amelioration of things

* Exod. xv. 3. Is. xlii. 13.

† Judg. v. 20.

‡ Psalm civ. 4. Heb. i. 7.

§ Psalm ciii. 13.

such as they are: and, while they never forbid endeavour to be made for the acquirement of useful science, or of arts likely to multiply the comforts of life, they introduce nothing calculated either to perplex or distract the inquirer; but, in the most even and unbroken tenour, and in language the most encouraging, exhibit all the gracious purposes of mercy, as revealed for the salvation of man, and this in a way the best suited to cut off every possible approach either to presumption or despair. Our Scriptures, therefore, deal in nothing like knowledge merely theoretical, but in the soundest lessons of practical wisdom; they afford us none of the knowledge which *puffeth up*, but only the wisdom which cometh from above, *which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits*; and such confessedly is that which must make *wise the simple*.

Objections may, however, be made to some of these statements. It may be said, that God is, nevertheless, in the language of Scripture, sometimes made the author of evil, and that it is unequivocally affirmed that he *hardened Pharaoh's heart*,*—that he *deceived the people*,†—that he occasionally *put lying spirits* into the mouths of the prophets,‡ and the like;§ all of which directly and plainly ascribe these evils to God as the primary cause. My reply is: It is true the language of the common translations of the Scriptures does usually speak in this manner; and, that hence it has often been supposed, these acts at least are to be ascribed immediately to God. It is, however, no less clear, that the language of the original says no such thing. By a mode of expression very commonly indeed in use among

* Exod. iv. 21, &c. † Jer. iv. 10. Ezek. xiv. 9. ‡ 1 Kings, xxii. 23.

§ On these forms of expression, see my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 112—119, where the equivalent Arabic forms are given and explained: see also the last discourse. With the passage in 1 Kings compare Job, xxxvi. 3. Gen. xlii. 30. Ps. lxxviii. 35. Jer. xiii. 16, &c. where the verb **נָתַן** is used in the sense of esteeming, ascribing, &c.

ourselves, we may be said to *vilify*, *magnify*, or *justify*, any one, without, at the same time, actually *making* him *vile*, *great*, or *just*, but only by ascribing these properties to him : so, in the Hebrew usage, to *harden* or *deceive* any one, or to *put a lying spirit* into his mouth, will only mean, that we ascribe these properties to the person had in view, but nothing more. In like manner, the prophets are commissioned to *hew down*, to *build*, to *plant*, and to perform a thousand other such acts, without intimating any thing more than that they are sent to *declare* them. Our Lord is said, in similar phraseology, to have *made himself* the Son of God, when nothing more could be meant, than that he declared or intimated that he was so. The greatest care ought, therefore, to be taken not to mistake and misapply language like this ; a practice, which, as already remarked, has frequently and extensively prevailed.

Many other passages supposed to favour this doctrine might be adduced : we shall now notice only one, namely, Prov. xvi. 4, where it is said, “ *The Lord hath made all things for himself ; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*” As the passage is here given, nothing can be more direct and positive than an ascription of evil to the creative power of God ; and, hence the place is often cited as decisive on this question. My remark is : Nothing can be more certain, than that the translations do generally and plainly inculcate this doctrine here ; while it is equally certain, at least to my mind, that the original speaks very differently. We have, it should be observed, in Hebrew as in English two verbs, one signifying *to make* or *fabricate*, and nearly synonymous with *to create*,—another signifying *to make* or *to do*, in the sense of *performing any thing*.* Now, in the passage under

* The verb עָשָׂה signifies generally *to fabricate* or *make*, which when ascribed to God becomes synonymous with בָּרָא, and with the Arabic صَنَعَ, *create* or *make* : while פָּעַל, which is used here in the Proverbs, is synonymous with the Arabic فَعَلَ, the precise and usual signi-

consideration, the verb used is not that which signifies *made* or *fabricated*, in the sense of *created*, but *made* or *did*, in the sense of *performed*; and it will then stand : *Jehovah hath done or performed all things for himself; and also the wicked for the day of evil* (or *calamity*). That is, supplying the ellipsis in the second member of the verse by the verb in the first, we shall have : *Jehovah hath done all things for himself* (or for his own purposes), *and also the wicked have done all things for* (*i. e.* to end in) *the day of calamity*. In the first member we have the great work of creation ascribed to Jehovah's sovereign will, and said to have been brought about for his purposes of mercy; we are taught in the second, that the efforts of the wicked, however wisely planned or prudently carried into effect, shall nevertheless end in disappointment and misery. How any other sense could ever have been ascribed to this passage, it is impossible for me to say; unless the verbs already alluded to were mistaken the one for the other at a very early period, and the mistake thus made unwarily persevered in to the present day. There certainly is nothing like obscurity in the construction of the passage itself, nor any word occurring in it of doubtful signification. It is indeed elliptical; but the ellipsis is natural and easy, and may be supplied, as is mostly the case in such places, from the preceding context. We may conclude then, in this instance, that we have nothing here at all bordering upon an ascription of evil to the creative or overruling power of the Deity; but, on the contrary, a doctrine as glorious as it is practical, and as necessary to the believer as it is good and true.

If it be said, that we have under every view of the

fication of which in both languages is, *to perform, do, not to make*. The entire passage is, **כָּל־פֶּעַל יְהוָה לְמַעַנְהוּ וְגַם־רָשָׁע לְיוֹם רָעָה** — Word for word : *The whole hath Jehovah done or performed for his (own) purpose : and also (the) wicked man* (or taking the word as generic, wicked men or the wicked) *for the day of calamity* : and, in this sense, it falls in well with the preceding and following context.

case, an instance of Jehovah predicting vengeance, which must, after all, make him the author of evil; I answer: We certainly have here, as in innumerable other places, vengeance ascribed to God; but then, both here and elsewhere, this is uniformly threatened and carried into effect, in consequence of the wilful commission of sin. In other cases, He is universally represented as faithful in sustaining that character which proclaims him to be a God of mercy, who pardoneth transgression, iniquity, and sin,—who nevertheless desireth not the death of a sinner, but that all should be converted and live.

An objector may, however, go much further here, and affirm (as it is sometimes done) of all the predicted purposes of mercy or of vengeance, that they involve an arbitrary interference of the Deity, unconditionally disposing of favours or dealing out judgments, which, as they result from the counsels of infinite wisdom and power, must, therefore, be unavoidable; and, that God must, in every point of view, ultimately be considered as the author of evil.

This, I reply, may perhaps seem to be a very logical inference, and be considered as satisfactory by many: to me, however, it appears in a very different light. The Scriptures no where threaten punishment, but as a consequence of known sin; and, if this punishment is *predicted*, the intention appears only to have been, to deter men from the perpetration of crime. If Nebuchadnezzar, or Pharaoh, or any other power, is threatened with punishment or destruction, it is because he has refused to attend to a reasonable request, or has exercised such cruelty towards others as he knew, even without the light of Revelation, was unjust, oppressive, and base. We have uniformly a reason assigned for the judgments; and, if it appear difficult to account for these, in connection with the all-wise and all-powerful character of the Deity, it is because we have not knowledge equal to the question: which should induce us rather to rely on the declarations of His word, than on our

limited powers of investigation. It is the undoubted province, as it is the privilege, of the Almighty to make predictions as to the particular purposes which it may be his intention to bring about, independent of man, or, of the manner in which he will deal with man under any given circumstances. With the first of these, human reason or human power had better not concern itself; they are the spontaneous acts of the Deity, planned and brought about in the exercise of His consummate wisdom, and are in every case intended to further the good of the creature. With the second, in which man is certainly concerned as an intelligent agent, concurrence and a cordial co-operation are every where demanded; and, upon these being tendered, assistance, approval, and, indeed, every temporal and spiritual good, are positively promised; but, on a contrary conduct being evinced, disapprobation and chastisement are as positively threatened. And, we may conclude, that, omitting *metaphysical inquiries* on these subjects, which can in no case conduct us to any safe result, we have nothing more than what any consummately wise and potent prince, or father of a family, would decree and bring about for the purpose of governing those committed to his charge. In every case, therefore, God is infinitely wise and good: those conclusions which have spoken a different language, have been the results, not of a careful and patient investigation either of his word or his works, but of a philosophy which has been founded in ignorance, and carried on in mistake.

We may now offer a very few remarks on this sort of reasoning in matters relating to religion, because it has always possessed a very considerable influence on the opinions and conduct of society, wherever it has been entertained; and, that its prevalence has been extensive, no one can for a moment doubt. Men have, when perplexed and harassed by difficulties which their own ingenuity alone has unhappily been allowed to raise, been anxious to dispose of these in the most expeditious way possible; and hence, they have in one case, had recourse to the doctrines

of an absolute and particular predestination and election; and, in another, to that of the liberty of the human will, grounded nevertheless on the same metaphysical principles.* It is not my intention here to enter on any general discussion of these doctrines, or to shew in what difficulties each party has, nevertheless, found itself still involved; because some of these topics will be noticed hereafter.† We shall now only remark, that it is exceedingly to be regretted, that recourse has ever been had to such expedients; particularly when we very well know, that all we can possibly discover on subjects of this sort, can never be worth the labour of inquiry to be bestowed upon them; and that they may finally leave us, like the wisest king of Israel, to exclaim, “Vanity of vanities: all is vanity.”

But this is not all the evil we may here fairly calculate upon: in addition to difficulties no less formidable than those which our several systems were intended to provide for, we shall now have to contend with the consequences of being wise above that which is written, manifested in divisions, in the endless rancour of party spirit and feeling, in the unity of the spirit being broken; and, in many cases, we shall find not so much as one remaining vestige of the once glorious appendage of the Church, the bond of peace.

How far these things may have been experienced among ourselves, it is not my business now to determine; that they have been experienced, and that to a considerable extent, is too obvious to require proof. It is enough for me to have

* So the followers of John Calvin tell us, that as the Deity is omniscient and omnipotent, nothing can be matter of contingency; and, consequently, *all things* must have been predestinated, and are, therefore, uncontrollable. On the other hand, James Arminius with his followers will say: Yes, it is even so; but then the Deity foresaw *who would be willing and obedient*, and provided accordingly. I will only say: It is a great pity that philosophers have not had philosophy enough to see, that all this is the result of ignorance.

† See Diss. I. Sect. viii. of the following sheets.

pointed out the principles from which they have originated ; we now hasten, therefore, to other matter.

Our Scriptures, then, in informing us respecting the character of the Deity, proceed on grounds the most obvious, easy, unembarrassing, and practical possible ; and these, it is clear, are those only which are suited to bring about the salutary ends they have in view. Let us now proceed to consider in what way they speak of man ; and, if it shall appear that the method here pursued is equally intelligible and efficient, we shall have it in our power to conclude, that they are indeed, what they profess to be, well calculated to *make wise the simple*.

In the first place, then, our Revelation, here, as in the case we have been considering, enters into no erudite, profound, or subtle, disquisitions on the properties of the mind, on the liberty of the will, the origin, nature, progress of thought, or of volition ; nor does it indulge us with any accounts, as to how its operations fall in or not with those of the Divine appointments, how it is itself constituted, where exclusively situated, or how it acts upon the body in the exercise of its several functions. On subjects of this sort, we have not so much as one word either directly or indirectly ; it is simply taken for granted, just as it is in the management of our worldly affairs, that instruction, effort, industry, control, encouragement, and chastisement, are necessary ; and on these grounds (which experience, indeed, has shewn to be effectual, if not the only ones likely to prove useful to society in general,) all their instructions are applied, urged, and carried on. We will not now stop to inquire Whether means more effectual than these might not have been employed, or Whether a more scientific method of proceeding might or might not have been instituted, promising more in theory, at least, whatever might have been its results in practice : We will merely remark, that, constituted as we are, without any apparent limits assigned to our powers for mental and moral improvement,—without

any measure being prescribed as to where the desire for truth, virtue, holiness, and happiness, may cease to operate ; or, how much sin, disobedience, vanity, or vice, may be indulged in without endangering the soul (all of which could not but have been ruinous both to individuals and society,)—it will be difficult, if not impossible, to devise any thing at once so wise, efficient, and good, as the requirements of our Scriptures here are. The veil thrown over these questions is surely one of the greatest marks of wisdom and of mercy, with which the Creator of the universe could bless his rational creatures ; because, while his word now calls for all the virtuous exertion of man, condemns the approach to every vice, and proscribes every sinner, however trifling his offences may seem ; mercy still forbids the greatest delinquent either to despair or to despond, and grace lays open a means, whereby not only pardon for the past, but strength for the future, shall be abundantly provided.

Under this system men are *esteemed*, what perhaps they may not exactly be in fact, either *just* or *unjust*, the children of God or of Belial, not exactly with reference to the quantity of moral good or evil which they may have done, or be capable of doing, but purely with regard to the obedience tendered to their heavenly Father and King. All is here (without instituting any inquiry about the moral tendency of this or that disposition) referred at once to the measure of obedience demanded in the word of God ; and, in conformity with this principle, the man is pronounced to be either in a state of justification or of condemnation in the estimation of his God ; because, we are told, “ *obedience is better than sacrifice.*” The question is not, whether the shades of character may not be very various and different, and have very different effects on society in general. Certain moral properties may, it is not denied, be, in *some sense*, good and valuable (and these, let it be remembered, seldom fail to find their reward). The question at issue purely is, (not, let it also be remembered, for the purpose of lowering

moral feeling, or of cramping its best exertions on society, but quite the contrary), How does man stand in the estimation of God? Whether he is like Cain, actuated by his own pride and self-sufficiency, bringing, it may be, a valuable offering to the altar, but forgetting that the only incense which can make it acceptable must arise out of a subdued and humble heart, and consist of the aspirations of faith, meekness, and contrition? Whether the merits of the Redeemer held and appreciated by faith do, as in the service of Abel, afford the sweet-smelling savour which alone can insure acceptance; and the holy influences of His Spirit prepare and sanctify the heart of the obedient offerer? And is this too much for the God of nature and of grace to require? Can any thing short of obedience such as this constitute a religious service, when in the concerns of life every thing else is, in the eyes of a superior, justly believed to be rebellious? Whatever therefore may be said on this subject, in other respects, obedience constant and sincere, must at least be called for in true religion; every other offering, however valuable it may be in itself, cannot *reasonably* be deemed valuable here. How such a service will assuredly be met on the part of God, will be matter for future consideration. We may, therefore, now conclude on this subject, that *the law of the Lord is perfect*, and that it is such truly as to *make wise the simple*.

We shall now only remark in conclusion: If the Scriptures are thus direct, plain, and practical; if their rich and eternal provisions of grace, mercy, and peace, are thus obvious, heart-searching, simple, and efficient; where, let it be asked, is the teacher or the hearer who can be said to have drunk sufficiently deep of their pure and refreshing streams? and where the Church, the Family, or the Individual, who has not, in some degree or other, had recourse to those turbid and agitated waters, which, driven by storms and tempests without, and presenting nothing better than corruption within, cast up hourly to the view and for the sustenance,

nothing but mire and dirt? Is it not then incumbent upon us to redeem the time, seeing that the days are really evil; and to confirm that which remaineth, lest it also be taken out of the way? To rely on system, on secular wisdom, or on secular power, has from the first been the great bane of the Church of God; and, it is more than probable, that these sins, with their consequent chastisements, will never entirely forsake it. Perfection is, indeed, never to be expected; yet it may be true (and of this the Scriptures abundantly assure us), that there are placed within our reach far higher degrees of religious knowledge and experience than any generally found among men; and a far greater meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, capable of being realised here on earth, than is either known or sought, and which could not but be, both in its exercise and effects, as advantageous to society, as it would be acceptable to Almighty God. Obedience, Simplicity, Faith, are the great qualifications called for; without these, we can never extensively profit; but with them we can never fail.

SERMON III.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

IT is not my intention here to discuss the various questions relating to the inspiration of the Scriptures, because the Apostle seems to have had in view, in the first member of our text, their *divinely inspired authority*, rather than any question relating to the manner or mode of their original revelation. I shall, therefore, in the first place, confine myself to the consideration of this point; and then, in the second, proceed to discuss those particulars which form the remainder of our text.

The most interesting light, perhaps, in which the Scriptures present themselves to an inquirer, is the super-human authority, and consequently, the perfect obedience, to which they every where lay claim. The Lord spake unto Abraham, Moses, or one or other of the prophets, is the constant language of the Old Testament; and in unison with this are the declarations of the New. Human authority is every where excluded in this question, and man is treated as a sinful, short-sighted, and, in respect to religion, as an ignorant being. The justness of this position will be considered in a future discourse; it will be sufficient for our present purpose to shew, that a book given as a revelation from above, and intended to be universally beneficial to mankind, must necessarily be of this character.

We know from experience that no moral truths however clearly stated, or ably recommended, can insure universal acceptance. The human intellect cannot be made to bow to any thing short of either purely mathematical demonstration

or supreme authority. The former of these is incompatible with the statement of moral truths ; and therefore, to make these binding on all, authority alone can be resorted to. There are, however, still other difficulties which can be overcome in no other way. One is, that of ascertaining what is or is not worthy of acceptation, in all possible cases ; and another, the impossibility of enforcing the practice of what may have once been ascertained to be thus acceptable. To the first, the powers of the human mind, assisted by all the advantages of experience, are confessedly unequal ; and, to the second, the perverseness and wrongheadedness of the many, will always present an insurmountable obstacle. In these cases, then, *authority* alone can succeed, and indeed the same holds good in all human laws. To this, then, the Scripture has very wisely, and, as it will be shewn hereafter, very justly, laid claim.

Morality has nevertheless been, and is still, recommended on other grounds. The requirements of society, which have sometimes been termed the fitness of things, have been urged with some success both in ancient and modern times ; and, the happiness usually attendant on virtue on the one hand, with the misery inseparable from vice on the other, has occasionally contributed to give a moral tone to the well informed, no less beneficial than it was admirable. On vulgar minds, however, reasoning of this sort can exert no force ; and of these the majority of society consists ; nor, on the well informed has it ever prevailed to any considerable extent. Authority, therefore, can alone be generally binding. Still, how rational soever and well directed the authority of the Scriptures might have been, there have never been wanting large numbers ready either to disregard this, or else to deny its real existence. With the first of these, who are habitual unbelievers, we are not, at present, concerned. Our business will be, therefore, to consider a few of the leading objections made by the second.

The class of objectors to which we now allude are those

who have assumed the title of *Rationalists*, and are principally to be found among the Divines of modern Germany. Their numbers are large, and their learning is considerable; and, as they propose their doctrines on what they deem to be the just principles of Scriptural interpretation, and argue that these are grounded on the deductions of sound reason, they merit the most patient, fair, and impartial, examination.

The principal objection, generally made for the purpose of impugning the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures, is to the doctrine of miracle. This, say they, is *impossible, improbable, and incapable of proof*.

With reference to the first position, which is by no means new, it may be replied generally: To determine what is impossible with man, is indeed no difficult thing to effect; but the question here is with respect to the Deity; and, from what we know of his power, it should seem to be no easy task to prove what is impossible with him. For, although we possess some general knowledge of his attributes, we confessedly have not enough to determine either the extent of his power, or the manner in which it must exert itself. These are particulars which neither experience nor science can teach us; and, as the Revelation itself is silent on them, it must follow, that whatever we may think or believe, we certainly have no real knowledge.

From *our knowledge*, or rather *ignorance*, therefore, it is perfectly absurd to attempt to determine what is, or what is not, *impossible* with God. This is a subject manifestly above our capacities; and as such we must for ever leave it. But, it is argued, in the next place, that from what we *do* know of the order of nature, and the established course of things, it is as impossible as it would be injurious to the whole, that any perturbation or event not provided for, should be allowed to happen; and this, it is added, the doctrine of miracle takes for granted. I answer: This is again, not only to set bounds both to infinite wisdom and power, but to assume a knowledge of things which no man living ever possessed.

Of the primary laws of nature we can know but little : from what we do know, however, we can positively affirm, that the common course of nature itself is liable to great perturbations : and the probability seems to be, that these are not conducive to the injury, but to the welfare of the whole ; and, that for all cases of this kind occurring in the natural world, provision has actually been made. The perturbations which we can observe, and which we are compelled by our ignorance thus to designate, are probably nothing more than instances of obedience to still higher laws, of which the mind of man has yet acquired no knowledge ; and which, until he has, may be classed with what we term *miracles*. Not, let it be remembered, that such occurrences can be miraculous with the Deity ; but only with such of his creatures as are unacquainted with the laws by which they are regulated, and the ends for which they may have been designed. In this point of view, then, such occurrences, varying it may be from the common operations of nature, can be referred to no other source than the *will of the Deity*, operating according to laws known only to his inscrutable wisdom, and for ends, in most cases, cognizable to him alone.

Again : to assert that such apparent anomalies cannot take place without being injurious to the whole, is to assert that which no man can prove : injurious, indeed, they may seem ; but this is a very different thing from positive knowledge that they are so ; and, from the order nevertheless observed, and the happiness so impartially and so extensively spread throughout the world, there are grounds for a strong presumption that they are not so.

Now, let it be asked, What is generally contended for by those who argue for the truth of Scripture miracles ? Not that something anomalous, unnecessary, or injurious, has taken place ; but, operations which can be referred to none but God as their author, — events which it is plainly declared have been provided for in the Divine counsels, which

are indeed as unsearchable to us, as are many of the causes operating in the natural world, but which contribute to promote the general welfare. If, then, laws not indeed necessarily connected with those which regulate the material world, but confessedly emanating from the same Lawgiver, are stated to be in operation for the purpose of furthering ends similar to those had in view in the creation, preservation, and support of man, and not more unaccountable in their origin, operations, and effects; Who, it may be asked, can affirm that these are impossible, or offer any thing like a shadow of proof that they are so? There may, indeed, be a presumption entertained that they are so; but even this can be held only on a contracted view of things, and that as unworthy of the unmeasurable system of mercy, wisdom, and goodness, with which we are surrounded, as it is unsuitable to the soul aspiring after the happiness, and anxious to realise all the blessedness, of which both reason and Revelation proclaim it to be capable.

But it still may be said, That it is *improbable* any such anomalous effects should be allowed to take place in a system emanating from the hands of infinite wisdom and power. I answer: With just as much propriety might it be objected to the probability of earthquakes, volcanoes, tempests, the flux and reflux of the tides, pain, and a thousand other such things,—all evidently brought into being and allowed to continue by infinite wisdom and power,—did not their occurrence afford us the amplest proof to the contrary. The same reasoning may be applied to both; and, as facts in the one case flatly contradict the conclusion which might be drawn, so may they in the other; and we shall hereafter shew that they actually do. No reliance, therefore, can be placed upon this kind of reasoning; and we now proceed to shew, that there is not only a strong presumption to the contrary, but an absolute moral certainty.

Let us now suppose man to have been placed on the earth such as he is,—without knowledge to any useful extent on the

subject of religion, liable to mistake and error, but yet capable of receiving instruction, and intended to enjoy immortality in a better state of being. If, then, we can suppose him to have been without knowledge on this subject (and without it he must have necessarily been, until he received it from some Being superior to himself), how, it may be asked, was he ever to acquire it? Man, as such, had it not either to enjoy in himself or to impart to others; and yet, it would not only have been unmerciful, but cruel, that it should be withheld. The high and immortal destinies of the soul must, in such a case, have remained unknown and undeveloped; the warmest feelings of the heart have for ever lain dormant; hope, the best motive to exertion implanted in our nature, could scarcely have had an existence in a world like this, abounding in temptations, mortifications, and trials; and the confessedly noblest work of an all-wise Creator could not but have been the most unhappy being to be found amongst the works of his hands.

In the universal darkness, then, which must under this supposition have necessarily prevailed, we can imagine it possible that some reflecting minds might have come to the conclusion that there was a Supreme Ruler who governed all things after the counsel of his own will; and that, although oppression, affliction, and sorrow, might be the lot of the virtuous here, there must be, nevertheless, an hereafter, in which judgment would be pronounced against wickedness, and an adequate reward apportioned to a patient endurance in well doing. And, if we allow this, at what shall we have arrived? Not that all this would have been *certain*; but only that it would have been probable,—a conclusion too weak either to disarm the hand of the oppressor, or to raise the heart or the hopes of the sufferer: and, to have gone one step further would have been utter *imposition*; and as such, would on the very best supposition generally be treated as falsehood, and its propagator as a liar and a wretch. If, then, the knowledge of God's will was at all to be made known to man, in a way

calculated to produce its due effect, I will now affirm, that this could have been done only by miracle ; or, in other words, in such a way as to carry with it the conviction that it was in truth the Word of God. In this case, but in no other, could men entertain an assurance that imposition had not been practised upon them, and that they could give an entire and hearty reception and consent to the whole matter revealed. It is not merely probable, therefore, that miracle would be resorted to in this case, but it was absolutely necessary that it should ; because a Revelation, properly so called, could have been made in no other way. So far, therefore, is the occurrence of miracle from being *improbable*, that it is *absolutely necessary*, to the establishment of a true religion in the world.

The last objection, that this is *incapable of proof*, is likewise futile. Believers do not here argue in a circle, as the objectors affirm ; but proceed on grounds as legitimate as they are truly convincing. If, say they, the Scriptures assure us, as matter of history, that the Almighty openly revealed his laws in the presence of the whole camp of the Israelites ; and, if we are also assured by the concurrent testimony of the persons then present, as well as that (originally received from them) of their posterity throughout all succeeding ages,—men, let it be remembered, who made no hesitation to rebel and resist the constituted authorities whenever it suited their purposes to do so,—we have reasons sufficient for believing that this was the fact ; but none that it was not ; unless indeed we are bound not to believe the declarations of any book professing to give accounts of which we had no previous knowledge : which is absurd. There are, moreover, other considerations, and such as to make it morally impossible that this was not the fact. We have predictions made on occasions similar to this, stretching out through periods of some thousands of years ; which, it should be observed, are generally of the most particular character, specifying times, families, persons, places, events, and their consequences, in a manner setting perfectly

at defiance all the doctrines of probabilities, with which science ever has been, or ever can be, acquainted. These are, in many cases, cited as miraculous, and the whole heathen world is openly challenged to do the like (which however was not likely to be attempted), they are then, with their fulfilling events, left as land-marks for the satisfaction and conviction of all future generations, that the hand of God was in this. It is true, these are all found in the Bible, as the objectors urge; and, it may be asked, Why should they not? If collateral history can now be adduced, to shew that the whole is false, let it be brought forward. Their being recorded surely affords the best opportunity now, as it formerly did, for their refutation and explosion. But this, as far as it is collateral, inquiry has shewn to be on the side of the Revelation and against the objectors.

Again; if these things were false, why have not the enemies of Revelation, and in this case the friends of truth, recorded the errors, and exposed the delusion? Why have not the histories of Trogus Pompeius, as epitomised by Justin, the fragments of Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, the writings of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and others, laid open and exposed the fraud? Or, to come lower down, Why did not Porphyry, Julian the Apostate, Hierocles, Iamblichus, Lucian, Antoninus Pius, or some of the literati of his court, convince the Roman world, that this was all mistake and imposition? Or, Why was not this done either at Athens or in Egypt, before the ancient records, now lost, were placed beyond the reach of inquiry? Had this indeed ever been done, or could it now be, we should have grounds for suspicion, that the writers of the Bible have been partial and unworthy of credit; but, to affirm that their testimony ought not to be received, supported as it is by the nature of the

* Some most valuable testimonies to the Scripture histories are to be found in the *Preparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius,—a work which is at this day too little read.

case, confirmed as it is by the fulfilment of the predictions alluded to, and established as it is beyond contradiction by all the collateral history now extant, is to my mind a proposition so monstrous and so unreasonable, that, did I not see it recorded and reprinted again and again, I should be induced to believe it never had an existence, but was one of those pious, or rather impious, frauds, which have, from time to time, been practised upon the world.

The grounds, therefore, upon which Christians believe the miracles recorded in the Bible, are not implicitly relied upon, because they are chiefly found there ; but, because, being found at all, recommended and confirmed as they are beyond all possible reason for doubt, they are worthy of all acceptance, at least until testimony equally convincing shall have been proposed, and shall have proved the contrary. For similar reasons it is, that we believe Grecian and Roman history : not, because it has been recorded by Grecian or Roman writers, respectively ; but, because it has been recorded by persons whose testimony we have no good reason to call in question : and the same would have been the case, had these facts been reduced to writing by Englishmen, or Frenchmen, provided we had reason to believe they had either been eye-witnesses of the facts themselves, or had made use of documents, which there is good ground for believing were worthy of credit. The proof, consequently, which is made out by Christians, as to the fact of miracles having been performed, is perfectly on a par with those offered as to the occurrence of those historical events which no one has hitherto called in question ; with this difference, the witnesses in the one case had neither national nor individual vanity to support, with the additional circumstance, that many of them sealed their testimony with their blood : in confirmation, let it be remembered, of a religion which, had they borne testimony to a lie, must have left them entirely destitute with regard to the present world, and hopeless as to that which is to come.

The next question we have to do with, and which is

perhaps peculiar to this school of divines, is the following : Although, say they, many events recorded in the Scriptures are there related as miraculous, and were most probably believed to be so by those who committed them to writing ; yet, when we consider the low state of the sciences in their times, and also find that all these events can be accounted for by having recourse to natural causes, we are bound to reject the miraculous character ascribed to them, while we are willing to allow both the honesty and good intentions of those who have delivered them down to us.

Suppose then, we allow, that the sciences never arrived at any high degree of cultivation among the Jews, which was probably the case ; How will the question now stand ?—If it can be shewn, that the writers of either the Old or New Testament have called in the aid of science, and failed in its application, there will, indeed, be reason to suspect that, whatever their facts were, their philosophy was wrong. But the truth is, they have called in no such aid. They have simply told us, that such or such an event happened at such or such a time or place,—that Moses, or David, or Isaiah, or some other Prophet, left such or such a prediction on record, which, at so many years afterwards was expected to come to pass : and which was actually fulfilled, at the time, and in the manner specified. We have now to judge of facts, not of philosophy ; of events, together with the passages predicting them, or the circumstances attending them : and, from all that I can discover, the state of science either at this or that period, has not with these the most distant point of connection. They have indeed been recorded as being, and they actually are, beyond the power of man, however aided by human science, or human experience, to effect.* Besides, the solutions offered by the objectors are not founded on any known science whatsoever ; they consist only of conjectures

* See pp. 138, &c. of the following Dissertations

the most childish and trifling ; and such, if I am not greatly mistaken, as to admit of no comparison in any other school, ancient or modern.*

Another favourite objection (and the last I shall notice), with this school is this : If, say they, we allow the Scriptures to be vested with divine authority, still they have never produced the unanimity which they seem, as such, to promise : and, therefore, whether we take them as possessing a natural, or a supernatural, claim to attention, the result arrived at is one and the same : the majority of those who know them are disobedient ; and millions have never yet heard of their existence.

I answer : In the first place, the goodness or badness of any code of laws can never be argued from the disregard with which it may happen to have been treated. This would be the same thing as to affirm, that laws are to be judged of by the lawless, and the maxims of virtue extant in any country, to be estimated or condemned, according to the taste of those only who are strangers to their requirements : unless, indeed, we can suppose the existence of laws such as to force the will, control the judgment, and irresistibly to bring about an entire obedience to all their enactments. But this would be to suppose the exertion of a constant miraculous power, unsuitable to the present nature of things, such as necessarily to put an end to every moral distinction between right and wrong, and to reduce the intelligent and now accountable creatures of God, to the situation of mere machines. But, if any persons are to be appealed to on the nature of such laws, it must surely be those who have examined and tried them,—those who have marked their effects under every variety of circumstance, and who could have no earthly reason whatever for offering an untrue testimony.

In this respect, then, the evidence tendered in favour of

* On this subject, see the Second Part of the First Dissertation, following.

the efficiency of our Scriptures is in all respects complete. We have here a cloud of witnesses, continued through a period of nearly six thousand years, testifying in the face of persecutions, mockings, scourgings, destitutions, death, and with a constancy, calmness, and intrepidity, unequalled in the records of time, and never adduced in any other case, that the word of God is both profitable and powerful. We have an army of martyrs, as remarkable in many cases for their learning, strength of judgment, and due subjection to constituted authorities, as they were disinterested in their profession, resigned in their sufferings, or joyful in their deaths. In them we find men who had submitted, not only to the doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, proposed in the Holy Scriptures; but who were as abundantly furnished to every good work, as the most rigid moralist, the most devoted philanthropist, the most rigorous interpreter of human laws, could desire or expect to find; and much more so than the world has ever yet seen in its almost endless list of heroes, philosophers, poets, and patriots.

But to descend to points still better known, and more widely felt. Taking the religion of the Bible at its very lowest estimate, and allowing that the sublimity and purity of its precepts have not invariably produced their due effects; still, I might ask: Did the public tone of morals in heathen countries, or in heathen times, ever present any thing comparable to what is to be found even among Rationalists themselves, where Christianity has been divested of more than half its power? Or, to descend still lower, Is it probable that civilisation would have ever smoothed the rugged path of life, or human society have exhibited any thing better than barbarism, had no such revelation been made, as that which is found in the Bible,* unequal as

* From the long continuance of barbarism in the South Sea Islands and elsewhere, without the least approximation evinced towards civilisation, taken in addition to the numerous instances in which many of them, even after

it is to the miraculous power of converting every stubborn heart, or of bowing down every objector to the humility of a saint in light? But, passing over these considerations, which however lay claim to our highest regard, the charge here considered, taking as it does for granted that, because the declarations of the Scriptures are not miraculously overpowering, (the possibility, however, of which in any case the objectors deny,) they are therefore powerless, rests on the fallacy, that because they will admit of being mistaken and misrepresented, they therefore possess no influence which can justly lay claim to the title of divine; a position too absurd to stand in need of a moment's consideration. We may therefore conclude, that, as those who have known them best, and whose testimony is consequently entitled to the greatest regard, have given and ratified with their blood, a very different kind of evidence, we are bound to admit, that they really and truly possess all the properties ascribed to them in our text, and, as the same Apostle elsewhere affirms, that they are "able to save the soul."

witnessing the advantages of civilised life, have again willingly relapsed into savage life, it may justly be doubted, that had man been originally placed on this earth in the situation of a savage, and no means of instruction been afforded him from above, whether all the powers he possessed, or could call into action, would have been equal to the task of making him any thing better than a savage, under any circumstances. My own opinion is, and I think it will be borne out by the facts of the case, that under such circumstances he would never have felt, or wished to have felt, any motives for exertion higher than those necessary to gratify his wants, or to provide for the very lowest gratification of his senses. It is common and easy, I very well know, to say, that other things *might have been brought about*. I contend, however, that the testimony of fact, as far as that is hitherto known, speaks a totally different language, and affirms, that the world has never yet seen any such efforts made by unassisted nature only: and, my conclusion from these premises is, that if man had come from the hands of his Maker in a state of savage life, and received no instruction from above, he must, and would, still have remained a savage to all intents and purposes.

SERMON IV.

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.—John, xv. 24.

WHEN we consider the relation in which God stands with his rational but fallible creatures, we shall be at no loss to perceive, that if obedience has been called for on the one hand, there must have been proposed on the other, sufficient reason for believing that it was God who made the call; or, in other words, If revelation demand an entire acquiescence on the part of man, without at the same time exercising a violent restraint upon his reason and will, it must also propose something adequate to convince him that the claims thus made are irresistible. The reason of this is obvious enough. The human mind has, for one reason or other, something like a natural propensity to religion. We cannot help believing, that beings superior to ourselves somewhere exist; and, consequently, that these ought to be regarded. We also know (to use a very homely phrase), that whatever the market calls for will be supplied. And hence it is, that claims to superior information on the head of religion, have perhaps been more frequently made, than on any other subject whatsoever. Tales the most marvellous and interesting possible have been invented, in order to meet the credulity of the many; and visions, dreams, and apparitions, have been appealed to, for the purpose of giving currency and effect to the imposition; and, the consequence has been, that men have not so much differed as to the being and character of God,—for most nations have been unanimous on these subjects,—as to what form of religion they ought to follow.

The religion, however, presented to us in the Bible, is of a character very far different from those usually proposed by these means. All we have here is simple, plain, unalluring,

and in some cases actually forbidding. We have here nothing, or next to nothing, calculated to excite the imagination; and certainly nothing which pretends either to polish the manners, or to supply the arts by which the politician might thrive, or the moralist surprise and dazzle. We have here a system of the most sublime truths delivered in language the most artless possible; accompanied however by evidences which defy competition, and powers which peremptorily demand belief; and, consonant with this is the sentiment delivered in our text: "If," says our blessed Lord, "I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

If, then, miraculous operations, such as to demand our acquiescence, have been afforded for the purpose of effectually recommending divine truth, our next question will be: How are these to be known to be such; for Scripture itself informs us, that false miracles also may be advanced, and such as may possibly deceive the very elect? I answer: The words of our text will supply us with the true criterion. Works, such as no other man *can do*, must be *truly miraculous*; — and, whenever these are publicly advanced, we may rest assured, that a just claim to belief has been made. It will be necessary here, however, to guard against misconception in the use of words. When our Lord uses the term *works*, we must be careful not to give too great a latitude to his meaning, for these reasons: There are works, we know, which some one man may be able to do, which no other can; or, which is the same thing in a practical point of view, to which no other man has been able to produce an equal. Such are the literary productions of some of the ancients, and of many of the moderns; feats of valour or of chivalry; works of industry or of art, which will perhaps, for ever remain matters of wonder and delight, and may probably never be equalled. Again, in the progress of science and of art, effects may hereafter be brought about, which some may be disposed at this day to pronounce

utterly impossible; and which, unless duly considered, may readily enough be supposed to deserve the name of *real miracles*. All extraordinary works, however, or events of this sort, depend not so much on the actual extent of human power, as they do on the exertion of the human capabilities, circumscribed as they now are and must for ever remain. The man, for example, who is blessed with good natural powers, and becomes by his industry and submission to privations the most learned man of his own or perhaps of any age, — the most expert philosopher, or the best mechanic, — will, nevertheless, possess no more of the power necessary to raise a man from the dead, enable himself to walk on the surface of the water, or to make a distinct and definite prediction which is to be fulfilled at the distance of a thousand years, than the merest peasant or even idiot will. These are *works* which confessedly exceed human power; they involve conditions which no improvement, of which either the body or mind is susceptible, can satisfy in any degree; and, therefore, we are justified in concluding, that what progress soever may hereafter be made in the arts or the sciences, the miraculous events recorded in our Revelation, being of a character which has no sort of connection with these, must for ever retain the character of *real miracles*: and consequently, leave all future generations without a fear of imposition, on the one hand, or any possible excuse for withholding their assent to its declarations, on the other.

An objection may, however, here be raised. It may be said, that we occasionally read, even in the Scriptures themselves, of instances of demoniacal exertions having been made, such as manifestly to exceed human powers;* and, that these, according to the doctrine here proposed, must be sufficient

* If the apparently miraculous powers of the wise men of Egypt, exerted in opposition to Moses, be referred to this cause, it may be suggested, that we have no reason whatever for supposing that any thing truly miraculous was performed by them on that occasion: all they did might have been done by juggling; but, when something was advanced by Moses which could not

to recommend what was manifestly erroneous, to general regard and acceptance. I answer : The accounts given of these demoniacal exertions do not seem to warrant the conclusion that they were superhuman. That they possessed an amazing influence on popular belief, there can be no doubt ; and hence, perhaps, resulted all their potency. My own belief is, that they went no farther than similar pretensions made in more modern times have gone ; and, that they consisted of nothing more than artifices, which every moderately informed person could easily detect. Omitting, however, what may have happened in those early times, of which we need not speak very positively, or even be anxious, we may safely affirm, that no such influences are now exerted. The spread of knowledge has, since the times of the Reformation, effectually superannuated the office of the exorcist, and divested every sort of magic of all its force throughout Europe ; and, what is still more to our purpose, such things are now nowhere else to be found as realities. The plains of Hindustan, the wilds of Tartary, the recesses of Ceylon or of China, the hut of the cannibal, whether of Africa, New Zealand, or elsewhere, will not furnish us now with one *well-attested story* of any thing in the shape of miracle, wrought by demoniacal agency. I am inclined to believe, therefore, (whatever may be advanced on this subject by Mohammedans† or others), that those works which man, as such, cannot perform, are really and truly miraculous ; and, that they could not have been brought about, without the co-operating will and power of the Deity. Great practical difficulties may, however, occasionally present themselves, as to whether certain given operations or events be truly miraculous or not ; and, for the sake of meeting these the more effectually, it may be

thus be done by them, they confessed at once that their powers went no further. Demoniacal possessions seem to have taken place in the days of our Lord ; but in these cases no miracle was attempted, as far as we know, by the persons possessed.

† See my *Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism*.

advisable to introduce a few other restrictions into our definition of a miracle ; and here we cannot do better than to avail ourselves of the instruction offered for this purpose in the Scriptures themselves.* If, then, we construct our definition thus : namely, *A miracle is an event such as to exceed the power of man to effect, and is brought about either for the purpose of fulfilling something predicted in a former revelation, or for furthering its objects and ends in one way or other ;* we shall have all we can possibly want ; or, at least, all upon which any reliance can be placed.†

These additional restrictions have been given for the following reasons : first, Miracles do not appear to have been afforded, except in cases where they were absolutely wanted, that is to say, either for the purpose of furnishing man with a revelation at the first, or of fulfilling such parts of it as consisted of predictions, and stood in need of such fulfilment, and thus to make it binding upon all. For this latter purpose were the miracles of our Saviour apparently wrought ; not, as it might seem, to supply an independent authority to the declarations of the New Testament, but only to insure the conviction, that Jesus was the CHRIST promised to the Fathers. The Revelation is, in these respects, now perfect in all its parts ; and hence it is, perhaps, that miracles have altogether ceased : and, unless we are greatly mistaken, they ceased just at the period at which their further exhibition

* Deut. chap. xiii. Is. xli. 21—23.

† These conditions in the definition of a miracle were first proposed in my Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism, Camb. 1824, p. 535, and were afterwards, with some variation, taken up and applied by the Rev. Mr. Penrose, in his valuable work on Miracles. If it be said, however, that by this view of the subject too much is taken for granted, I answer : The *miraculous acts or events* so taken for granted, are such as to admit of no doubt as to their being truly miraculous according to our shorter definition : upon these therefore we may rely ; and, as the definition has been thus augmented only for the sake of facilitating our inquiries in later times, no objection, of which I am aware, can be offered to its form.

would be unnecessary.* And, if this be true, every pretension to miracle made since those days, or to be made hereafter, must necessarily be false; and such, in truth, all claims of this sort hitherto made have proved to be.

Another reason for these restrictions is: *God cannot be inconsistent with himself*. Every thing, therefore, laying claim to the authority of a miracle, but tending in any degree to thwart or contradict the declarations of a prior revelation, must be false; and, in this case too, of whatever date such pretended miracle might be, we can have no possible doubt that it was an imposture.

It will be necessary here to shew in what respects the usual definition of miracles appears to be defective, in order to justify the proposal of another. If then we define a miracle by saying, That it is something which must suspend or contravene the ordinary operations or laws of nature, we shall lay down a condition which will prove useless in a great variety of cases, and inapplicable in many others. We have, for example, numerous predictions and other revelations made in the Bible, in which not so much as one law or operation of nature has either been suspended or contravened. Such are all or most of the prophecies delivered; and the same may be said of many of the miraculous events brought about: such as the Babylonian captivity, with its termination and the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the fall of the Jewish polity, &c. which, taken in connection with their several circumstances, were truly miraculous; but in which, nevertheless, none of the general laws or operations of nature were either suspended or in any way contravened.† Besides, it may be justly doubted, whether we

* There does not seem to be any good reason for believing that miracles were wrought after the Apostolic age; and certainly no miraculous prediction has been made since that period.—See the Bishop of Lincoln's History of the Church, &c. illustrated from Tertullian, pp. 96, 97.

† Nothing is more common with Hume, Gibbon, and other writers of their school, than to insist on the position, that by the occurrence of miracles

have knowledge enough to determine, in a great variety of cases, when the ordinary laws of nature are suspended or not : and, although we may lay claim to some general knowledge on this head, yet it will never be in our power to affirm, whether many of those things which appear to us to have been thus brought about, do in truth contravene or suspend any of the primary laws, under which it has pleased the Almighty to place this system of things. But we can determine with sufficient accuracy and certainty, how far the exertion of human powers, properly so called, will go : we may, therefore, safely rest our question on these grounds.

Another consideration, and one of great importance here, is : No one will, on this view of our question, be left in a state of doubt, as to what is or is not really a miracle. With ourselves, as well as with the Mohammedans, the custom has been (as it necessarily must) to appeal to the decisions of the learned, in order to know whether any given event were truly miraculous or not : because, it has been supposed, where an acquaintance with the sciences was necessary for this, the ignorant could never be certain, until assured by others better skilled than themselves, as to what did or did not constitute a real miracle. We may remark, Where mixed science is necessary to determine such point (and to the unmixed we cannot appeal), there never can be knowledge sufficient to produce an assurance, that we have not been mistaken. Science, therefore, will be unavailable in questions of this sort : and, when we look at the Mohammedan world, and consider to what conclusions some of the best metaphysicians and philologists ever known

the ordinary laws of nature must necessarily have been suspended. Without, however, urging the consideration, that even this could not have been too much for the Author of Nature to do, provided he thought it necessary to do so, we may affirm, that of the miraculous acts or events recorded in the Bible, very few required any such suspension or contravention of the general laws of nature, if indeed any did.

have come, with regard to the Koran,* we shall, perhaps, see enough to assure us, that our conclusion is borne out by fact. But, in making our appeal to the extent of real human power, we introduce a condition upon which every man of sound mind and some experience can promptly and safely judge; and, at the same time, appeal to a measure, which can readily and effectually be applied to all questions of this nature.

Having dwelt thus much on the first portion of our text, we may now proceed to consider the declaration it makes in the second: "If I had not done among them the works," it is said, "which none other man did, *they had not had sin.*" From what has been said, it must appear, that if it is reasonable something adequate to produce conviction should be afforded where a claim to belief is advanced, we have in our Scriptures the most satisfactory assurances, in this respect, that the claim made is divine. Our business will now be, to consider the end for which this claim has been made, and these grounds of faith afforded; namely, that *we may not*, to use the language of our text, *have sin.* Now, without proceeding to affirm, as some have done, that the human mind presents us with nothing but a mass of ignorance and corruption, we can, without at all affecting any positive doctrine of Scripture, or any truth derived from experience, affirm, that, notwithstanding all its imperfections, it does possess many properties which even the angels may envy, and some, perhaps, which they cannot excel: hopes, desires, energies, and capabilities, truly ennobling; sympathies, which have in some cases borne a character more than earthly; and fortitude and perseverance, upon which all the accumulated evils of life have expended their force in vain. On the subject, however, of true religion, these otherwise justly admirable properties are, of themselves, not only uninformed

* See my Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism, *passim*.

and unprovided with objects and ends worthy of their endeavours, but they are impotent, torpid, sullen : they rarely, perhaps never, possess either energy or enterprise sufficiently potent to urge their possessor to inquiry ; and, in many cases, they can be roused into action and warmth only to oppose, injure, or destroy it.

These dispositions are, in the language of the Scriptures, classed under the general head of unbelief ; and, as our subject is here purely practical, we now proceed to consider in what way the miraculous exertions of the divine power, which we have been noticing, ought to be applied.

All unbelief, then, may be considered in two points of view : first, as to that which is *entire* ; and, secondly, as to that which is *partial*. Of that kind of unbelief which is *entire*, we shall now say nothing, because it does not appear to have been contemplated in our text ; and because it is not likely, that where Moses and the Prophets are disregarded, any thing we may have now to advance will obtain a patient hearing. Of the second we may say, that as it applies to a great number of professing Christians, some of whom hold the truth in unrighteousness, and others who do not appear to carry their belief to any profitable extent, a brief and calm inquiry can never be unacceptable.

Our first question will be, then, as to What effect the overwhelming demands of our religion have produced on our own minds individually. The first requisite of belief seems to be, that we acquiesce fully and entirely in the *declarations* and *example* of the Son of God—that we believe, without reserve or qualification, that he has both the *power* and the *will*, fully and freely to provide for all our wants, and that we are bound patiently and joyfully to follow his example under all circumstances.

With regard to the first of these, namely, an *entire faith* in the Son of God, there is but too much reason to believe, that it is neither found nor felt so universally as some imagine. If it were, then indeed would our land flourish,

and our cities be strangers to complaint. Because he, whose faith is reposed on this Rock of Ages, will have neither cause nor disposition to complain. Confidence, attended as this is, will be sufficient to support his mind, and to raise his hope above the conflicts of a world, which he knows shall soon cease; and to afford him, even here, some anticipation of those purer joys, which it has not yet entered fully into the heart of man to conceive. On this faith he can firmly rely—in this hope he can daily make his boast; because he has discovered and has felt that God himself is his Friend; and that Christ, who once died and rose again, has actually entered the heavens there to prepare a mansion, and to make intercession, for him. Of this he has received the strongest assurances, which the combined testimony of history and of miracle can give. He feels too, and knows he has found, beyond all possibility of doubt and from the evidence of a power within, which the world can neither give nor take away, that this doctrine is true, and that it is of God. Such was the testimony and experience of the Apostles and Martyrs—such the preaching of Prophets and of Saints, from the earliest dawn of time, down to the last death-bed; and such, from the nature of the case, must the conviction and the confession be of every true disciple of Christ.

It is not therefore the conviction or the confession alone—it is not the strength merely of evidence afforded that Jesus is the Christ, or the human assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love God; nor is it an impression, however deep this may be, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:—these are, indeed, the first principles of the oracles of God; and they are those, which the means of grace must first implant in the belief and in the experience of all who shall be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:—there are still higher considerations than these:

there must be an actual adoption into the family of heaven, an enrolment in that number which composes the hosts and armies of the Lamb; there must be a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;—a burial of the body with Christ, and a resurrection with him in the renewal of the mind; there must be a power afforded and realised within, as sensible as it is glorious, as convincing as it is encouraging, that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,* that the love of Christ is administering its constraining influences,† and that God is working within both to will and to do of his good pleasure.‡ Out of an obedience to the faith crowned with these testimonies of the Divine approbation and assistance, grows that restoration to the Divine Image, which enables man again to be like his Father which is in heaven,§ and to bring forth fruits to his glory. With such an one, faith has had its *perfect* work, its novitiate and its progress, its seed-time, growth, maturity, and is now white and waving for the harvest. The growth, the bud, the blossom, have been healthful; the rains and the sun from above have co-operated with the labours of the husbandman; and now, the pains of the culture, and the glories of the maturity, wait only for the last great act of the Lord of the harvest, to be gathered into the garner, and to enjoy everlasting repose. It is not merely, therefore, *not to have sin*, that results from the faith of Christ; there are still other triumphs of the cross, other blessings, other wealth, which the Son of God has to give, and which he does give in the richest abundance; not only consolations, but peace, and that the peace of God; not only evidence strong and overwhelming, but confirmation, assurance, a testimony within which cometh from above, and which, while it makes the believer the best citizen of the world, prepares him for a crown, and a kingdom which shall endure for ever.

* Rom. v. 5. † 2 Cor. v. 14. ‡ Phil. ii. 13. § Matt. v. 16, 45, 48.

Throughout life we are instructed, delighted, and in many cases stimulated to the most arduous undertakings, by a recital of the greatness of purpose, the unwearied diligence, or the unparalleled virtue or valour, of some character of antiquity ; and, perhaps, most of the deeds either of arts or arms of modern times have owed their commencement and consummation to some such circumstance : because, here we find something well suited both to stimulate and to support the mind under the sacrifices which must always be made, to bring about any thing truly useful and valuable. But what are these to the approbation of the Almighty, and to that eternal glory, splendour, and renown, which awaits the soul of the faithful disciple ? What comparison can here be made with the doubtful results of human enterprise, and that victory which God has promised, and of which Christ has afforded an earnest, that it shall be sure and complete ? If we look for motives to action, surely it is allowable to seek them where the assurances of success are the most potent, and the result to be arrived at is the most valuable. In this respect, the faith which is in Christ Jesus admits of no comparison. For, while we have nothing at all calculated to destroy or to injure a good name here on earth, but, on the contrary, every thing to secure and maintain it, we have an assurance that neither angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here the mind is exalted, not only to the highest and noblest point of human ambition, but to a degree, which, while it gives efficacy to virtue, carries with it a demonstration that the power evinced is of God ; and affords an evidence, at once as excellent as it is decisive, that it is this alone, which can effectually raise, bless, ennoble, and sanctify the soul of man.

It might be thought, however, that such a system of belief and assurance as this is, would be of too theoretic a

character for beings such as we are ; and, that it would tend to raise the feelings to such a degree, perhaps, as to destroy the sympathies and condescensions necessary for the purposes of human society. It may, indeed, seem so ; and it has, in fact, proved so, perhaps in every case in which nothing more than an abstract faith, or an intellectual assurance of salvation, has been sought or acquired. But here the disciple, not the discipline, has been to blame. The candidate for the provisions of grace has overlooked the first and most necessary qualification for these acquirements, namely, the humble and the contrite heart—the subjugation of the evil mind, and of the evil propensities : in short, to learn and to remember, that unless he manifest, or labour to manifest, the *spirit of Christ*, he is none of his,—that though he speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,—and though he have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge,—and though he have all faith, so that he can remove mountains, and have not charity, HE IS NOTHING ! And here it is that the example of our blessed Lord will never fail us,—that the commentary, which must not be separated from the text of our theory, can never be misunderstood : for He spake as man never spake, insomuch that all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. He lived and He died, the just for the unjust, not only that he may purchase and redeem to himself, and with his own precious blood, a church and a people zealous of good works ; but also, that he may afford them a standing and permanent example, in which they might contemplate and follow his steps. “ Who,” as we are instructed, “ when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” If any thing can be added to this more than human exhibition of all that is great and glorious, it must be the exquisite tenderness manifested over the falling city which had proved his inveterate foe, but which knew not the time

of her visitation ; or the last agonising and expiring prayer, “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” These are sentiments and feelings, which we know the best in every age, however they might have fallen short of their full realisation, have admired and extolled, wherever they have found them : they are the virtues, which experience assures us, bespeak the highest and the noblest minds, and which alone can make man, what he ought to be, energetic, courageous, temperate, constant, amiable, holy, and happy : they are the marks of that high origin to which he lays an indisputable claim, and they are pledges to the world, that if he had once lost, he has now regained, the privileges of his birth-right, and has become a child of God. And, if it be asked, how a rational being can with certainty apply his powers and his privileges in such a way as to administer to himself and to all, the greatest portion of happiness attainable on earth, with the assurance of a glorious immortality in heaven, it may, after a recital of the faith and practice of Jesus, be answered, “ Go, and do thou likewise.”

SERMON V.

The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did ; by the which we draw nigh unto God.—Heb. vii. 19.

No subject has proved a more fertile source of discussion and of mistake, than that which relates to the requirements of the Law and the Gospel ; not because these involve any real difficulty in themselves, but because opinions once formed are rarely brought to the test of examination, and, because mistake once made, is rarely found in circumstances ready to submit to correction. If, however, we can ascertain, from a calm investigation of the Scriptures, and of the nature of the several cases, the main scope and object of both, we shall be enabled to come to a conclusion as consistent with these in general, as it will be intelligible and practical.

It would, in the first place, be unnatural to expect from a Divine revelation, any thing with regard to its mode of teaching very different from what we find generally adopted among men. Necessity and custom usually suggest, in the one case, what is most efficient ; and if, when we come to the other, we were to adopt any thing of a different description, we should perhaps introduce new and untried means of access to the judgment and the feelings, without any real necessity for doing so, and certainly without any good prospects of success. All laws must, we know, have these two properties : They must lay down clearly and authoritatively the intentions of the lawgiver ; and to the non-observance of these they must annex and enforce punishments. Because, laws which cannot command a claim to the attention of all those for whom they may have been designed, and are not vested with powers sufficient to punish the refractory (for it is to curb the licentiousness of such that they are prin-

cipally given), will be vain and nugatory. In the next place, no laws can provide for the pardon of those who dare to transgress their enactments, because the enactments themselves must be supposed to be just, at least; and it is out of the power of justice to provide at once for the punishment of crime, and for the pardon of its commission. For the same reason, no law can allow of laxity in its execution; for, to relax any of its obligations, would be the same thing as to deny the justice of its enactment, which would ultimately divest such law of all its authority and efficiency. This is necessarily the character of all human laws; or, at least, it is that which they are intended to maintain. They may, indeed, occasionally enact in one clause what they virtually repeal in another; and such instances actually occur; but this, wherever it is found, has been the result of mistake, not of intention,—of human infirmity, not of the principles of human legislation.

In this view of the question, then, all laws must necessarily take their course; and the criminal once convicted must submit to the whole and every punishment which they may have decreed. Cases innumerable may occur, however, in which human infirmity, rather than positive wickedness of intention, has been the cause of the transgression; and, of such the history of mankind will afford us a very extensive catalogue. In cases of this kind, then, what is to be done? The law will admit of no excuse; and yet the culprit possesses a very powerful claim to be excused. And, as the good of society will in no way be benefited by withholding the boon, no good reason can perhaps be assigned, why mercy should not be extended to such offenders. Our next question will be, How can this be done, without effectually annihilating the laws already enacted and published for the general good of society? The answer that will be given will probably recommend something of this sort: A power to investigate and adjudge such cases, may be vested in some one or more persons, without at all interfering with

the general enactments of the law; and the decisions of which may properly enough be termed *acts of grace*. Such a power as this has, we know, existed, perhaps, from the very infancy of society; and, it has usually been exercised either by the Sovereign himself, or by the executive Government of the country. There have, therefore, usually existed and been recognised two sources of adjudication: one, the written or otherwise existing law of right and wrong; the other, the power of suspending the sentence of the law, where good cause could be shewn, why it should not take its course.

Let us, in the next place, inquire to what extent human laws can be carried, and how cases are generally adjudged by them. No human law, then, can be carried with effect farther than to judge of the *conduct* of individuals. The *intention*, which must also be judged of by circumstances, will doubtless very much tend to influence the opinion of the judge; but then, it is not even in this case upon the intention, but upon the actual transgression, that sentence is pronounced. And, as the intention can, in a vast variety of cases, be but imperfectly known, such mistatements or errors of evidence as happen to occur, are usually reckoned in favour of the prisoner; and, as it is more desirable that some criminals might escape, than that *one* innocent person should suffer, an inclination to mercy will ever form one of the most necessary and praiseworthy qualifications of the human judge.

Let us now come to the consideration of our Divine law; and if we find *that* exhibiting an analogy of principle perfectly coinciding with those already noticed, we shall succeed at least in making the principles of both understood; and perhaps shew, that the method adopted by the Divine law for the instruction and regulation of society, is not only authoritative, but also the most reasonable and efficient. Let us, therefore, in the first place, consider the character of our moral law.

If we attend to the manner in which St. Paul speaks of this law, we shall find, that his expressions are synonymous

with those we have been using, with reference to laws generally. “Now we know,” says he, “that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge (rather, the recognition or conviction) of sin.”* Again: “The law entered that the offence (rather, a sense of the offence) might abound.”† And again: “I had not known sin (or rather, had not known what was sin) but by the law; for I had not known lust, (*i. e.* as such), except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”‡ The object of this law therefore was, first, to instruct mankind as to what they ought to do, or from what they ought to abstain; and, secondly, to annex the promise of rewards, or the threats of punishment, to what should, or should not, respectively, be performed or abstained from, in compliance with its several declarations. The necessary consequence of this would be, either a sense of merit or of demerit in the persons subject to this law. The passages just cited from St. Paul go directly to the question of demerit; and this, as we shall presently see, was really all that this law could effect. The laws of nations, therefore, and those laid down in our Scriptures, generally proceed upon the same principles; the only difference discoverable in them is, the different authority on which they stand, and the different character, tendency, and extent, of their several enactments. The authority on which our Divine law rests has already been considered: || the particular character of its requirements will be discussed in another place. § All we have now to do will, therefore, be to consider its different tendency and extent.

The tendency, and indeed the object, of human laws, is merely to provide against those contingencies, or to punish

* Rom. iii. 20. † *Ib.* v. 20. ‡ *Ib.* vii. 7. || Serm. III. IV.

§ Dissertation I. Section x. in this work.

them when occurring, which may prove injurious to society generally ; and, as far as they are available for the purposes of morality, they are for the most part of a negative character, forbidding those crimes only of which they can take cognizance, and annexing the punishment decreed whenever these have been perpetrated. The scope, as well as the object, of the Divine law, however, is of a much more extended and complicated character. Its business is not only to advance the interests of human society, but also to prepare its subject for a higher state of existence ; and, accordingly, it comprehends the command to abstain both from every suggestion, and from all appearance, of evil ; and, moreover, lays its obligations on the believer to persevere in every good affection and work. It therefore lays its precepts upon the heart, and as much condemns the sinner in thought, as it does the transgressor in deed, whether such deed be done contrary to its declarations, or have resulted only from a neglect of obedience to its commands.

Here, it may be remarked, may be seen one of the great and necessary ends of a Divine revelation. Human laws can provide only against certain evils : they will deter the robber or the murderer from the perpetration of crime to a certain extent only, not universally and without exception. The Divine law, on the contrary, makes actual provision for the existence and cultivation of every virtue. It affords motives and grounds sufficient to recommend it to the regard of all rational beings ; and holds out encouragements such as to create an assurance, that no sacrifice is too great to be made for its cultivation, furtherance, and enjoyment. And this is the great desideratum of man ; this is the acquisition of which the reasonable soul stands most in need, and without which it never can, and never will, find satisfaction. We have here, therefore, that, and that only, which a revelation ought to afford ; and, we have that too which nothing else can. In this respect, then, our law is efficient and good.

Again ; human laws, as already remarked, can be available

only to a certain extent, because the judge can determine from appearances alone (and in these he may occasionally be deceived): the power of punishment too, with which he is invested, is both partial and limited. The Divine Lawgiver and Judge, however, is very differently situated and empowered in these respects. He can see and judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and his power to punish is full and complete in every point of view. No human artifice can here baffle the one, nor time or circumstance circumscribe the other. The law is perfect and effective; and the consequences are positive, permanent, and inevitable. "Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God," says the ancient lawgiver, "with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* And, "on these two commandments," declares our blessed Lord, "hang ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS."† This law is, therefore, from first to last, spiritual; and it claims, as it ever has done, an entire control over the thoughts and purposes of the heart, over all the plans, projects, tempers, and acts of the life.

Let us now see, on what kind of subjects this law was intended to act. That man is an infirm and imperfect being, no proof need be adduced; the testimony of experience is so constant and so intelligible, on this point, that it must be a work of supererogation, to offer any thing either to corroborate or to explain it; we shall, therefore, offer none. It may be asked, then, What is a being so circumstanced to do? By the moral law he stands condemned; for it is written, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*"‡ Will such an one have recourse to after-deeds of virtue, and so, by a life partly virtuous and partly vicious, attempt to satisfy the requirements of a law, which pronounces death, at the least, upon *every transgression*? Whatever may be said of the Divine economy, human laws certainly admit of no such

* Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18. † Matt. xxii. 37—40. ‡ Gal. iii. 10.

evasion. The open and wanton transgression of these must be visited in every case ; and, if they take not away the life, afterwards of virtue may possibly recommend the penitent to the regards of society ; but the law must first be satisfied ; and, if death be the penalty (as it is the case with the Divine law), no further sacrifice for sin can be either proposed or made. “ *The soul that sinneth,*” it positively declares, “ *shall die ;*” * and, it adds : “ *No man can redeem his brother.*” † Human powers, therefore, how efficient soever they may be in other cases, can do nothing in this ; and, where “ *every mouth is stopped,*” and “ *all the world pronounced guilty before God,*” ‡ nothing short of an exertion of the Divine energies and favour, can propose any thing adequate to save a being thus situated.

Having, then, ascertained the character, objects, extent, and summary conclusions, of the Divine law, we may now consider the bringing in of that better hope mentioned in our text, by which we are enabled to secure the inestimable privilege of drawing nigh unto God. We have seen in what way human laws generally provide for the penitent but unpresumptuous transgressor ; we now come to inquire, whether the Divine economy, of which we have been speaking, does not propose its favours in a way in some respects analogous. “ *All have sinned,*” says St. Paul, “ *and come short of the glory of God.*” || This is, as we have seen, the sentence of the moral law. But, with reference to the pardon of which all must now stand in need, it is said : “ *Being justified* FREELY BY HIS GRACE *through THE REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through FAITH in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the REMISSION OF SINS that are past, through the forbearance of God,—to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and THE JUSTIFIER of him which believeth in Jesus.*” “ *Where is*

* Ezek. xviii. 4. † Ps. xlix. 7. ‡ Rom. iii. 19. || Ib. iii. 23.

boasting then?" continues he; "*It is excluded. By what law?—of works? Nay: but by THE LAW OF FAITH. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified BY FAITH without* (χωρίς, apart from, separate from, independently of) *the deeds of the law.*"* This doctrine is stated still more strongly, if possible, in the Epistle to the Galatians, thus: "*For as many,*" it is said, "*as are of the works of the law ARE UNDER THE CURSE: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.*" And it is added: "*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*" It is then said: "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*"† And again: "*If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham BY PROMISE.*"‡ And again: "*The Scripture hath concluded ALL UNDER SIN, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ MIGHT BE GIVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE.*"§

From these extracts, I think, the following propositions can be fairly deduced: first, That salvation is not to be had by *the works of the law*;—secondly, That it is proposed for attainment through the exertion of *faith in Christ*; not *without* a compliance with the works of the law, but on another, a different, and an additional ground;—and, thirdly, That the final cause of its attainment is purely the *grace and mercy* of Almighty God. The first of these points has already been discussed; we shall now, therefore, proceed to consider the second; and then, in order, go on to the third.

By *faith* seems constantly to be implied in the phraseology of Scripture, that disposition of the mind which not only

* Rom. iii. 24—28. † Gal. iii. 10—13. ‡ *Ib.* ver. 18. § *Ib.* ver. 22.

believes all its declarations, but also implicitly confides in their goodness, authority, and final fulfilment. We now speak of those parts of the Revelation which distinguish it from all other systems of religion ; namely, its provisions for the soul of man, in the *atonement of a Redeemer, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, the promises of all things necessary for life and for godliness, and of a crown and kingdom beyond the grave which shall never fade away, together with all the threats of punishment denounced against the wicked.* These parts of the Revelation call immediately for *faith* in the believer ; because they involve matters which can rest only on the word and faithfulness of God. The moral law is not of faith ; it holds out matter rather for obedience : and its declarations are not only good and authoritative as coming from God, but also as considered in themselves : they will command the assent of the reasonable man, because they are good and fitting for the purposes of society. And, it is worthy of remark, that where the peculiar doctrines of faith are unknown or disregarded, the law of works is of necessity most strenuously insisted upon. We mention this merely to remark, and to recommend it to consideration, that these things are *widely* and *essentially* different ; that the one is what the Christian and the Pagan must recognise at once to be good and just ; the other, that, and that only, to which the man grounded in the faith can give a full and hearty reception and obedience. In this point of view, then, it is by the exertion of faith alone, that we can manifest an entire obedience to Almighty God ; every thing else may proceed from human sanctions, and may be practised only from worldly motives. Faith in the Scripture as the word of God, and a firm reliance on those provisions which are there made for our salvation, are the only means whereby we can truly honour him, and evince at once that reverence, obedience, and love, which, if a real revelation has ever been made, ought to exist between the creature and the Creator.

We have hitherto spoken only of the character of Scrip-

tural faith, and of the reason why it seems to have been made the test and means of salvation. Let us now consider some of the declarations of Scripture on this subject, and particularly those which keep in view the distinction just made. “*If Abraham,*” it is said, “*were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.*”* That is, if Abraham had indeed fulfilled all the moral law, this would have afforded him a real and a good ground for exultation among men; because he might thus have been termed a *benefactor* (εὐεργέτης),† and been held up for imitation to all succeeding ages. But, “*what saith the Scripture? Abraham BELIEVED GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*”‡ Abraham believed the promises; he placed a firm reliance on these, in addition to his obedience of the moral law: he walked indeed before God and was perfect; but, he did more, he consulted not with flesh and blood: he knew that He who commanded him to sacrifice his son, was also able to raise him from the dead:§ he staggered not at the promises:|| he went out, not knowing whither he went: neither the deadness of Sarah’s womb, nor the unknown countries in which he was to sojourn as a pilgrim, nor that unseen city whose builder and maker was God, formed matter of doubt or hesitation with him: faith realised the promises made; and he became not only a *benefactor to human society*, but THE FRIEND OF GOD, the Father of the Church, and the great and memorable example, in these respects, for all future ages. So that all who are of the faith are even now designated as his spiritual children, and as heirs with him of the same promises and privileges. And hence the Apostle concludes on this most interesting subject: “*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if*

* Rom. iv. 2.

† Luke, xxii. 25.

‡ Rom. iv. 3.

§ Heb. xi. 11, 12, 17, 19, &c.

|| Rom. iv. 20, &c.

*we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered FOR OUR OFFENCES, and was raised again FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.”**

It is remarkable, to what an extent this distinction is kept up by the Apostle. “*To him that worketh,*” says he, “*is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*”† And again: “*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*”‡ Or, in other words, before we had received the knowledge of salvation by faith, we were, like others, subject to the law of works, to the elements of the world, which could raise us, at the best, to a distinction no higher than that of servants, profitless and unprofitable. It is then added, with reference to those who are Abraham’s spiritual seed: “*Because ye ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no MORE A SERVANT, BUT A SON; AND IF A SON, THEN AN HEIR OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST.*”§ The great argument which the Apostle had constantly to urge upon the Jews (and which indeed is the great argument which ministers have still to urge) was, the inestimable privilege held out to the exertion of faith; the reward proposed upon the subjugation of the whole man to God; and that adoption of children, which, under Christ as the great Head of the Church, will enable all to exclaim with affection and confidence, *Abba, Father.*

Here, then, we have that BETTER HOPE, which the moral law never did, and never could, know or recognise: it is that which, as a covenant of mercy and of grace, ratified indeed by God’s oath, and sealed by the blood of Christ, constitutes a real and positive relationship between Him and man; and which exalts the believer above the station of servant, to which alone he could aspire under the moral law, to that of *friend* and of *son*, through the redemption that

* Rom. iv. 23, &c. † *Ib.* ver. 4. ‡ Gal. iv. 3. § *Ib.* ver. 6, 7.

is in Christ Jesus, and makes him an heir of eternal life. It is here that faith is said to have its perfect work, and hope to be the anchor of the soul *sure and steadfast*: that man can rejoice both in the common and peculiar mercies of his God, and that his joy is both *permanent and full*.*

If, then, the destinies of the human soul are immortal, What, it may be asked, can be so acceptable or so suitable to its earthly welfare as instruction of this sort? Or, again, If a revelation has actually been made from above, What could possibly have been its drift or end, if it were not to vest the hopes of man with certainty, as to these its immortal destinies; and to assure him, that these shall finally be blessedness and peace? Why, it may be demanded, has God spoken, if it were only to discover those moral duties, which the requirements of society alone will teach to some extent; and which, when taught, are in their own nature binding upon all? Surely the mission of Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, must have been almost in vain, if their messages recognised an extent no greater than this; or to assure us that, after all, we were *unprofitable servants*? Neither was miracle necessary to urge that, which all must have allowed to be good; nor could faith or hope have been reasonably called for, where there could have been no strong ground either for belief or expectation. But, when we come to the consideration of the soul's immortality, and of the necessity there is that man should both know and be assured, that this is attainable in all the blessedness of which his nature is capable, we see at once why this revelation of mercy was made, and why it was made principally to call for an unlimited exercise of faith.

It may be said indeed, as it often is, that this view of our subject will tend greatly to lower the requirements of the Moral Law: which is, however, a great mistake; for here

* John, xv. 11.

alone it is that we can find either its authority or its use ;—its authority in being a part of a Divine revelation ;—and its use in preparing man for a higher and far more excellent state of existence. We do, indeed by this view, confine the law to its proper office ; namely, to teach man his duty, to convince him of his imperfections and sins, and to bring him accordingly to the cross of Christ for pardon and peace ; but so far are we from divesting it of these its salutary and necessary powers, that we establish them ; and declare, that, without the righteousness thus urged and complied with, no man can see the Lord.

It will now, perhaps, be said that, in this point of view, *faith* is still *a work* ; and, that to be justified by it will be the same thing as to be justified by works. I answer : There can be no doubt, faith is to all intents and purposes an operation of the mind, and, therefore, a work ; and, that it is accordingly termed, both by our Lord and the Apostle, *a work*, the *work of faith*, and *the law of faith* ;* but then it is in no case said to be the *final* cause of justification or salvation, but only the *means* to be employed by man. The *free gift* must, after all, come from the *grace* of God ; and, do what we may, this gift will be still unmerited, and totally independent of this and of every other work. All that can be said of faith, in this point of view, is, It is the means graciously appointed by God, and to which he has promised to annex the mercy had in view ; not because the exertion of faith will in any case merit the favour, but only because He has been graciously pleased to appoint this as the means which he will finally accept and bless. If faith be a work, therefore, it is one of a character very different from those supposed to grow out of the moral law ; and certainly from those which the Jews generally offered as the grounds of their justification. Its tendency is to call forth the affections, and to command

* John. vi. 29. 1 Thess. i. 3. 2 Thess. i. 11 Rom. iii. 27.

the endeavours; not for the purpose of boasting, or to further its own glory, but only to secure salvation, and to magnify the grace of God. Its reliance is necessarily and solely in the mercies of the Lord; its effects are such as at once to establish the moral law, to constrain the believer to walk in the Spirit, and in all the commandments of the Lord blameless; and then to wait patiently for all the blessings had in view, at the hands of Him alone who has promised to grant them. This, therefore, although essentially different from the law of works, is nevertheless still a law; it is the great condition of the covenant of grace, which has been ratified and published for the good of man, and that he may know and be satisfied, that the promise is *sure* to all the seed. God *has* promised, on his part, to afford every blessing; and, for this purpose, the means of grace have been established and maintained in the face of a world of enemies. Man is called upon, on his part, to believe, to receive, and to employ these; and, where this is done, there can, we are assured, be no failure. The whole process is such, as to exhibit in the most clear and most encouraging light, the mercy and the grace of God; to call forth in man the warmest affections and the best energies,—to make him what he ought to be with respect to the world around him, and to put him in possession of hopes, encouragements, and enjoyments, which will combine to make life a well-grounded anticipation of heaven, and death the commencement of its glorious realities.

The last point we have now to touch upon is, what has already been termed the *final* means of salvation; namely, the merciful disposition of the Almighty; but, as this has already been partly discussed, it will not be necessary here to say much. According to the Scriptures, every good and perfect gift cometh from above. Man is, in every case, represented (what he truly is) a short-sighted, weak, and imperfect creature. In the commonest circumstances of life, he gathers his means of support from the produce of the earth, and

requires the assistance of the less perfect animals for his welfare, as well as the enactment of laws for his safety. In the momentous question of religion, which is of a higher and more peculiar character, nothing can be more obvious than his utter inability to know, much less to do, any thing adequate to insure his final happiness; but here, the mercy of God has made known the way of peace. To pardon sin, to assist the faithful and obedient soul, must, in the nature of things, result solely from His power, and be His prerogative. Unassisted man must at best be but an unprofitable servant, and, as such, can never work out his own salvation; and therefore, if the hope of such a consummation is ever to be realised, God himself must work with him, both to will and to do, to suggest, instruct, assist; to provide the means suitable to man and worthy of himself; and also to manifest His disposition finally to accept and to bless him. But this has all been done. The feast, as it is styled in the Gospel, has been abundantly prepared; and men are invited to come in from the highways, the lanes, the streets, and freely to partake. One thing is required; That they come adorned with the habit, which has been prescribed, prepared, and presented to them. The great sacrificial feast is spread, the banquet is furnished; the bread provided is richer and more nourishing than angels' food; and the wine is more precious and invigorating than any ever known at earthly banquet. "*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,*" it is said: "*therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*"* Here we shall find that, indeed, upon which the soul may delight itself with fatness; the bread which came down from heaven to give life to the world; and the wine, which if a man drink he shall never thirst, but which shall supply a fountain within him, springing up unto everlasting life.†

* 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

† John, iv. 14.

It may now be asked: Can any one suppose personal merit to exist in the accepting of this invitation, where the guest has manifestly nothing to give, but every thing to receive? Surely, the nature of the call, of the confessedly unmerited provision, must be sufficient to exclude every approach towards boasting, and to bring all to confess,—“*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy MERCY, and for thy TRUTH's sake.*”^{*} If, indeed, a little exertion is called for (and at best we have not much to afford); if acquiescence is demanded, when God himself has spoken, and spoken manifestly for our good; the man who could be disposed to boast, either of his own knowledge, or power, or virtue, or efficiency, must surely stand in need of information, as to what are the very first requirements of human knowledge and human experience, and be less than a child in intellectual attainments. Equally unreasonable and disobedient must he also be, who, because he knows, or has the power to give or to do, but little, will therefore refuse to receive greater light, or to offer the whole of his imperfect services, but rather content himself with reasoning about the properties of the Divine mind, just as if the Divine will had never been plainly and authoritatively revealed. And yet characters of this sort have always been abundant in the Church. If, however, we would aspire to the high privileges of our calling, let us, as we ought, never cease to be urgent and earnest in the work of self-examination; because, there can be no doubt, no one is entirely exempt from a sinful inclination to one or other of these cases of unbelief, which indeed compose the great rock of offence. The presumed merit of *works*, on the one hand, or of *knowledge*, on the other, forms indeed the great and the prevailing heresy: men are anxious, in the one case, to ascribe to themselves the merit of not presuming to think; and, in the other, of not daring to act; while the word of

^{*} Psalm cxv. 1.

God clearly and positively calls for both: and such is the inconsistency often witnessed, that both will embark in questions and practices on which the word of God has laid a positive interdict. The language of the Scripture, however, were we humbly disposed to inquire, would never fail to assure us, that *the law of the Lord is perfect*; that it demands our obedience, both in thought and in deed: reason too, were we disposed calmly to consult it, would assure us, that this is nothing more than what a revelation from above ought to require.

SERMON VI.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.—John, viii. 58.

As these words convey no precise idea to an English ear, I may perhaps be excused if I offer an explanation of them, before I proceed to consider the doctrine which they contain.

It is customary with the Oriental nations, and, after them, with the Hellenistic Greek writers, particularly when treating of historical questions, to introduce past events or incidents to the attention of the reader, and then to speak of other circumstances (past indeed with reference to him), as present with regard to such events. This custom is also recognised by writers purely classical, as indeed it is by our own, to some extent; and, in these cases, it has usually been termed the *historical tense*. The words of our text are of this character. Our Lord here affirms, that, before the times in which Abraham lived, he exists; or, in our phraseology, he existed; or, more conformably with the Oriental idiom, Imagine yourselves living in times prior to those of Abraham: in those I am in being;* or, as we should word it, *Before Abraham was, I was*. In this sense, indeed, the passage has usually been taken; although no solution of the phraseology has been offered.

We may now proceed to consider the doctrine here intended to be inculcated. It was shewn in the preceding discourse, that, according to the declarations of the Scriptures, both the Law and the Gospel must necessarily stand together; the one to form a rule of right and wrong, without which there could be no fixed standard of virtue or vice; the other to propose and secure pardon for those misdeeds to

* See, on this doctrine, my Hebrew Grammar, p. 343, &c.

which our nature is so liable. It shall be our business now to inquire, whether this has not been the case from the very beginning of things; and whether it shall not, according to the Scriptures, continue to be so to the end of time; and lastly, to offer some remarks on the value of this consideration, and on the suitableness of the system thus originated and perpetuated for our instruction and advantage.

The first of these, then, or what is usually termed the Moral Law, stands thus in the pages of the first revelation: "*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"* Again, at a period somewhat later, it is said: "*But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.*"† Here, then, we have laws formally promulgated, and the consequences of transgression expressly stated; these partake of the character of all other laws, and like them admit of no relaxation, and make no provision for pardon. Of this character too are all the other statutes and commandments published in the Bible, whether they originate with the Patriarchs, Moses, the Prophets, our Lord, or his Apostles. They are laws, from the observance of which there is no appeal, and from the permanency of which nothing can in the least degree derogate. Heaven and earth we are told shall pass away, but not so much as a jot or a tittle of the law shall, until all shall have been fulfilled.‡

Another consideration, tending to shew the perpetuity of the Moral Law, may be deduced from the fact, that a very large proportion of the morality taught in the New Testament is

* Gen. ii. 17.

† Gen. ix. 4—6.

‡ On this subject, see Diss. I. Sect. x. of the following sheets.

cited from the Old, and urged purely on its prior authority : the only difference discernible in the two cases is, that in the New Testament the reader is more particularly guarded against mistaking the *letter* for the *spirit* of the precept. St. John tells us, for example, that the man who hates his brother is a murderer;* and our Lord, that he who looks upon a woman lustfully, is already guilty in spirit of the act of adultery.† Whence it should seem, that to abolish the Moral Law, could never have entered into the mind of any of the writers or teachers under either dispensation.

The nature of the case, moreover, makes it impossible that the Moral Law can ever be abrogated. For, first, the declarations of the Gospel, as such, however excellent and necessary they may be, were not given either to teach, or immediately to enforce, morality. Constituted as we are, it must ever be necessary, that the distinctions between good and bad, virtue and vice, be distinctly and authoritatively kept up ; but this it is not the province of the Gospel to do. Its declarations go to the questions, as to how the *grace* of God has been made known, how it may be secured in order to insure pardon, and how the blessings thus had in view ought to be sought, applied, and appreciated.‡ And the consequence almost universally witnessed is, that those who lose sight of the Moral Law, and endeavour to live in the enjoyment of the Gospel only, gradually relax in watchfulness and self-examination, and imperceptibly become sullen, morose, conceited, and overbearing ; believing too, at the same time, that they are enjoying nothing but heaven within, and exhibiting nothing but heavenly-mindedness without. And thus, while they have no doubt they are making their calling and election sure, they are neglecting both in theory and in practice to

* 1 John, iii. 15.

† Matt. v. 28.

‡ This, according to my notions, is the peculiar province of the Gospel. That moral precepts are found in the New Testament there can be no doubt ; but these, I argue, form no part of the Gospel, strictly speaking ; they are, on the contrary, a part of the Moral Law.

cultivate the spirit of Christ, without which, we are positively taught, all must be reprobates.

But further, it is the Moral Law and that alone, which must first reduce, and then keep in subjection, the fallen mind of man. To its hard and stony surface, the voice of reason, and indeed of grace,* will be applied in vain; and to nothing short of that sword of the Spirit which is quick and powerful, will its labyrinths of error and deception give way, and stand revealed in all their hideousness of deformity, and turpitude of character; or bring the sinner to exclaim, "*Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"† The truth is, every thing else has hitherto failed; and, if we may judge of the future from the past, every thing else for ever must fail. But this is not all: the subjugation must continually be carried on; the heart must not only be prostrated for once, but it must be kept down for ever: and this the Moral Law alone can do. Precept must here, as the Prophet has truly said, be laid upon precept, and line upon line:‡ and this must be incessantly repeated, where we have to deal with an agent, *above all things deceitful and desperately wicked*.§ The wily monster will rise again and again, and in every new effort to resume its primitive ascendancy, will take a shape and a colour more alluring and deceptive than the last. These the law of God alone can detect and expose; and, when detected, the Spirit of God as afforded only by the Gospel, can cope with and overcome: so that he alone who is furnished and complete in *all* the panoply of heaven, can ever hope to be more than a conqueror in this warfare.

Let us now consider, in what the system of the Gospel

* It is no uncommon thing to hear *grace* spoken of as being omnipotent in its character and effects. Facts, however, speak a different language; it is, in a large portion of society, constantly and effectually resisted: besides, the Scriptures speak of it only as the result of mercy, not of power.

† Rom. vii. 24; see the context here.

‡ Is. xxviii. 9, 10.

§ Jer. xvii. 9.

consisted, how it was made known, and how it was reduced to practice, under the first dispensation. This system, then, which has very properly been termed *the covenant of grace*, went first to the point of revealing *the gracious and merciful character of God*; and thence to assure man, as an infirm and sinful creature, that pardon should, under certain circumstances, be extended to his transgressions. The most common declarations of this kind are, that *The Lord is gracious and merciful, and pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin*.^{*} In other cases it is said : “ *I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*.”[†] It will not be necessary to multiply examples ; these are sufficient to shew, that the requirements of the Moral Law, as well as merit on the part of man, are here perfectly out of the question ; and that mercy is proposed solely on the ground of *grace* or *favour* in the Almighty. The first instance, however, which we have of this mercy revealed on the part of God, is that mentioned immediately after the fall, and at the time when it was first wanted : “ *I will put enmity . . . between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head ; and thou shalt bruise his heel*.”[‡] Here, I say, we have the mercy of God, interposed for the support and consolation of the first pair, at a time and under circumstances, which not only preclude every idea of merit to be urged on their part, but exhibit directly the contrary ; nor could the Moral Law, which they had received, make any provision for this ; the facts of the case sufficiently proving, that its infraction had now made a revelation of grace necessary. It will be idle and unnecessary to attempt to shew precisely, to what extent this promise was then understood ; it will be enough for us to affirm, that it must have been understood as containing *a promise* ; and that, given as it was, upon the forfeiture of the first privileges and the sentence of death, if understood at all,

^{*} Exod. xxii. 27. xxxiii. 19. xxxiv. 6, &c.

[†] Is. xliii. 25.

[‡] Gen. iii. 15.

it must have been taken in the sense of providing, in some way or other, for the loss sustained, and that both its revelation and favours resulted purely from the *grace of God*.

That this promise must have been known to Noah, there can be no reasonable doubt; but, to what extent it was understood, we neither can nor need say. That he was a preacher of righteousness we are informed by St. Peter;* and, that he received a covenant from the Almighty, we are also informed in the book of Genesis.† Of what particular character the *righteousness* mentioned by St. Peter was, we have not the means of knowing; but, it is most probable that the object it had in view was, the regulation of society; and if so, it must, in order to its being authoritative, have been accompanied by the Divine sanctions, and, consequently, must have been revealed. Nor will the *righteousness* mentioned here admit of a lower interpretation. The *covenant* spoken of, however, is more specific; this could have been none but a covenant *of grace*, because its object was to assure the Patriarch and his family, that the world should be cut off in their sins no more by the waters of a deluge; but that day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, should uninterruptedly continue to recur in their appointed seasons.

There is, however, another circumstance recorded in the life of Noah, which well deserves attention; it is that of his offering sacrifices immediately after his egress from the ark, and on that occasion sacrificing none but *clean* animals; which seem to have been provided in pairs consisting of sevens, for that purpose.‡ But for what end, it might be asked, could the distinction of clean and unclean be made at that day? Not for the purpose of eating the flesh, for this they had not yet been allowed to do; nor is the distinction particularly specified in our Bibles, earlier than the times of Moses. That it was made, however, we are certain; and

* 2 Ep. ii. 5.

† Chap. ix.

‡ Gen. vii. 2. viii. 20—22.

the probability is, that this was done for the purpose of sacrifice only. Abel too, we learn, offered an acceptable sacrifice long before this time; and this was the sacrifice of a firstling of his flock, which we are told was accepted, because it was offered *in faith*. We will now only say, that these are certainly religious observances, and that they look like Divine appointments.

If we proceed downwards to the times of Abraham, we shall, in addition to the promise made to Eve and the covenant given to Noah, find a promise also made, that in this Patriarch's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. What this blessing was, St. Paul has informed us;* and, that Abraham saw the day of Christ, and was glad, we have the testimony of still higher authority.† If we descend to the times of Jacob, we shall find this blessing limited in its channel to the tribe of Judah.‡ In the days of David, it is confined to his house.§ In the times of Isaiah, this deliverer is to be born of a virgin, thus verifying the particulars of the first promise: he is moreover to sustain the character of *mighty God*, *everlasting Father*, and *Prince of Peace* to whose kingdom there is to be no end.¶ If we

* Gal. iii. 16.

† John, viii. 56.

‡ Gen. xlix. 10.

§ Ps. cxxxii. 11, &c.

¶ Is. ix. 6. As objections have frequently been offered to this translation of the passage, and, as some of these have lately appeared from the pen of Dr. Nicholl, the late Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, in a volume of Sermons (Oxford, 1830), I must be excused if I here offer a few remarks on them. In the first place, Dr. Nicholl objects to the rendering of אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר by *mighty God*, because he says the Divinity of Christ, to whom this epithet must finally refer, was not revealed during the times of the Old Testament; and he proposes, that *mighty powerful one*, be substituted for it (p. 64). I answer: To affirm that the Divinity of Christ was unknown under the Old Testament dispensation, is to take for granted the thing to be proved: which must suffice on this subject. In the second place, this term, used again by Isaiah himself in chap. x. 21, as allowed by Dr. Nicholl (p. 61), can mean none but *God*; and, as he also allows that this prophecy

proceed on to the times of Daniel, the period, the circumstances, the consequences, of this mysterious person's appearance, are all marked out and defined in such a manner as to leave no doubt that the hand of God was here concerned; and that it was the hand of power, of *mercy*, and of *grace*. In the commencement, progress, and issue, therefore, of the divine light, we contemplate the dawn, the outpouring, and the full splendour, of the perfect day; taking its rise in dark, but sure, intimations of its future glories, and then spreading its beams into the remote and darkest corners of the earth, which had been the habitations of ignorance and cruelty. The Sun of Righteousness, indeed, rose early with healing in his wings; but its final triumph,

relates to the Messiah, the obvious result must be, that the Prophet meant to inculcate that the Messiah would be Divine both in his nature and attributes; and confirmatory of this may be cited Matt. i. 23, *μὲθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός*: God is with us. But Dr. Nicholl finds other difficulties: one is, the want of the definite article (ה, *the*) here; and another, that the prophecy could not be understood until it had been fulfilled. With regard to the first, it requires but little experience to know, that the want of the article in any language, can necessarily exercise no real influence on the signification of the words used. If, for example, אֱל גִבּוֹר means *mighty God* in one place, by what rule of interpretation is it, in another, to change into the sense of *mighty powerful one*, when in each case it is destitute of the article? Suppose now we had the article in the one place, but not in the other, Would this make it necessary thus to alter the signification? I think not: and so, we have מָשִׁיחַ *Messiah*, not הַמָּשִׁיחַ *the Messiah*, in Dan. ix. 26, where it is impossible to doubt that *the Messiah* is meant (see also my Heb. Gram. p. 310). With regard to the other objection, without attempting to ascertain to what precise extent this, or any other prophecy, was understood in the times of Isaiah, which would be absurd, we may perhaps conclude, that it was understood as far as the usage of words at that day could make it so. I think, therefore, that the terms *mighty God*, as found in our version, are quite justifiable, especially as the Evangelist has left us an explanation of the passage to the same effect. Dr. Nicholl's criticism on this passage is defective in other respects: he says (p. 62): "Agreeably to this explanation, we find, that in the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint, which is the only

the everlasting day, with which it was to bless intelligent creation, was suspended for a season ; perhaps to assure all succeeding ages, that this was a work of mercy, and one which nothing but Divine power and goodness could have commenced, continued, and completed.

Let us now take a brief view of this question as discussed in the New Testament. Here, then, the whole system laid open by the Apostles, claims to be nothing more than the fulfilment of promises and covenants made long before ; of which the *more sure* word of prophecy is, according to St. Peter, one of the safest and most authoritative vouchers.* The preaching of John commences with an appeal to the predictions of Isaiah ; † and the venerable Simeon is permitted

one of the two primary texts we can refer to in this case, in consequence of the corruption of the whole passage in the Roman, these words are rendered by *ισχυρος, εξουσιαστης*, (although it will not be denied, that these words appear evidently to have been interpolated), &c.” My remark is : It is strange that Dr. Nicholl should not have been aware of what Grabbe has said on this passage. His words are : “ Eusebius, lib. vii. Demonstrat. Evangel. p. 336, hunc locum ampliorem allegat, insertis inter ista, *μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος*, et hæc, *ἄξω γὰρ εἰρήνην*, sequentibus verbis : *θανμαστός, σύμβουλος, ΘΕΟΣ ΙΣΧΥΡΟΣ, εξουσιαστής, ἄρχων εἰρήνης, πατὴρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος* Atqui additamenta ista non à Scribæ, sed ipsius Eusebii manu profecta, ac ab eo tanquam ipsorum τῶν δὲ juxta quædam exemplaria, non alterius interpretis, verba citata esse . . . Irrefragabile verò hujus rei argumentum mihi suppeditant *Irenæus* et *Clemens* Alexandrinus, ambo Origene antiquiores, qui eadem vel plane gemina è suis τῶν δὲ, codicibus allegârunt,” &c. (De Var. Vitiis LXX. p. 29 — 31). If, then, this reading is genuine, as Grabbe thinks, the authors of the Septuagint must have coincided much nearer in their opinions on this text with our translators, than with Dr. Nicholl. I must object, moreover, to Hezekiah’s having any thing whatever to do with this prediction, as I also must to his being a type of Christ, and likewise to the double interpretation of prophecy, which Dr. Nicholl here advocates. I am sorry to differ from authority so respectable ; but the love of truth must be my apology. My views on the interpretation of prophecy generally will be seen in the first part of the Second Dissertation, found in the sequel.

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

† Luke, iii. 4, &c.

to depart in peace, when his eyes had seen the salvation which had been prepared before the face of all people, the light which had been promised to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of God's people Israel.* St. Paul tells us of the Gospel preached to Abraham † as well as to the Israelites in the desert; to some of whom it afforded neither light nor consolation, because it was not mixed with faith in them who heard it; but which, nevertheless, the law could in no case disannul. ‡ St. Peter and St. John, too, tell us of the Lamb foreordained, or slain from the foundation of the world, || which can admit of no other interpretation than, that Christ suffering for the sins of many, had been taught under types and shadows before the Jewish polity had an existence. And what, it may be asked, has St. Paul declared was the scope and object of the types and shadows of the ceremonial law? Has he not distinctly affirmed, that the end of these was Christ? And if this is the case, that system must have had respect to him alone; it must have exhibited him as suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring many to God: and, accordingly, the declarations of the earliest prophecies respecting his mysterious birth and character, only afforded an united testimony with the rite of sacrifice and other symbolical representations, that salvation should be secured by the sufferings of a Redeemer. If Christ too was represented by the slaughter of a lamb without blemish, before the foundation of the world, as St. Peter has assured us, Where, I ask, are we to look for this, if the firstling which Abel offered in faith, preceded as it had been by the promise of Him who was to bruise the serpent's head, with similar occurrences, is to be totally disregarded? Or, How are we to account for the usage of clean animals for the purpose of sacrifice, in the

* Luke, ii. 29, &c.

† Gal. iii. 8.

‡ Heb. iv. 2; Gal. iii. 17.

|| 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. xiii. 8.

times of Noah, unless we have recourse to the doctrines of St. Paul and St. Peter on the subject of sacrifice, and directing us to the death of Christ? Conjecture, I know, has been had recourse to; and, because the Revelation has not *positively* declared that this is the fact, it has often been argued, that it therefore is not: and then, as if neither the Old Testament nor the New had afforded us any thing contributing to the true interpretation of these mysteries, reasons the most vague, unscriptural, and inapplicable, have been propounded, allowed, and often acquiesced in.

It may be asked, however, If the first promise of the Redeemer was made so very specific, and could, as we know from inspired authority, relate to none but Christ,* Where can be the impropriety of supposing, that this would be strengthened by other considerations, even in the very earliest times? And, if so, What considerations could have been more appropriate or striking than the custom of sacrifice, which both believer † and unbeliever may be cited to shew was, from a very high antiquity, held to be piacular? This point, as far as it regards the sacrifices offered under the Jewish polity, is systematically argued by St. Paul; and the conclusion drawn is, as already noticed, that the end or substance of these things was Christ. ‡ But, he also tells us that the Gospel was preached to Abraham: and in his day also we find the sacrificed lamb,|| and earlier than his day, in the times of the very first pair, and nearly coeval with the first promise of the Redeemer.§ Why we should have recourse to probabilities of another sort, and then proceed to affirm, that the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Kings of ancient times, and even under inspired teachers, had no knowledge whatever of these things, I am quite at a

* See the following exposition of Rev. xii. † Job, xxxiii. 24.

‡ Col. ii. 17. Heb. ix. x. &c.

|| Gen. xxii. 7.

§ Ib. iv. 4. Of the *firstlings*, &c. So in the law of Moses. Exod. xiii. 12. Lev. xxvii. 26, &c.

loss to conceive. That they had not all the knowledge which we now possess, may be readily enough granted: but then, they must have known that all this exhibited a system of *mercy and of grace*; they must have been aware that some ulterior end was had in view, and this, if they had any curiosity, they must have desired to see.* They must also have known, that *faith* was eminently called for, because all depended upon promise, and had no connection whatever, either with the moral law, or with the merit of man. And, the truth is, they waited for the salvation of God:† they “*all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”‡

The more usual head, however, under which this subject is introduced and argued in the New Testament, is that of *the covenant*; and this was a covenant of grace: “*For this is my covenant,*” says the Apostle, citing one of the Prophets, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, || “*that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. . . . For I will be* MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, *and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith,*” continues he, “*A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*” By the *first covenant*, as here taught, is meant, according to the next chapter,§ the ceremonial observances, which, as they had now received their completion in the person and sufferings of Christ, must of necessity pass away.

We are also instructed, in the same Epistle, “*To look to*

* Luke, x. 24.

† Gen. xlix. 18.

‡ Heb. xi. 13.

|| Heb. viii. 10—12, 13.

§ Chap. ix. 1, &c.

Jesus the mediator of the NEW COVENANT, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."* And in another place it is said: "*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through THE BLOOD OF THE EVER-LASTING COVENANT, make you perfect in every good work to do his will.*"† Here we find the covenant termed EVER-LASTING, and the blood of Christ identified with that shed symbolically from the earliest times. In the Acts of the Apostles, this is termed, *The covenant which God made with the Fathers*: "*Ye,*" it is said, "*are the children of the prophets, and of the COVENANT which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*"‡ This covenant, therefore, was not new in scope or in substance, but only in form and observance. It had now assumed a more glorious character, in exhibiting the humiliation and sufferings of Him who was God and with God, and by whom all things had been created and made, and this to atone for the sins of fallen man. It also pointed out to the believer a system of mercy and loving-kindness, which indeed had been made known from the first, and had been kept up by the faithful in all ages, under the cumbrous observances of a ritual law, but had now been revealed in a flood of unimpeded light and warmth, as miraculous and convincing in its circumstances, as it was comprehensive and glorious in its effects; as honourable to God, as it was encouraging to man; and as intelligible and practical, as it was convincing and good.

In all these instances (and to these innumerable others might be added) this covenanted mercy and grace is appealed

* Heb. xii. 24. Where *the blood of sprinkling* cannot, by analogy, refer to that of Abel's person, but to that of his sacrifice, as practised afterwards under the Law. See Lev. xvi. 15. Is. lii. 15.—Better, because the work was far more instructive, complete, and glorious.

† Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

‡ Acts, iii. 25.

to, as a thing about which there had never been any doubt. If, indeed, the mention of it had been only incidental, or had first come to light in the times of Isaiah, or of some one of the minor Prophets, or had been first propounded in the New Testament, upon the authority of that revelation alone, then might we have concluded with Warburton and others, that the Fathers had no knowledge whatever of these things, and that life and immortality had exclusively been brought to light in the times of Jesus; or, with others, that the Law is at variance with the Gospel, and actually opposed to it. From what has been said, however, I think we are bound to come to a very different conclusion;—that not only was the law of faith made known as early as transgression had made faith necessary,—but also, that a system of means, dark and shadowy indeed in its character, yet too expressive to be misunderstood, was also set up, carried on, and finally amalgamated with the more enlightened one established in Jesus, when the fulness of time had arrived, and when the purposes of God had, as to this point, received their consummation.

From what has been said, I think it must be clear, that, from the very first promise of Holy Writ, down to the declarations of the last inspired writer, the object of faith, namely the person of a suffering Redeemer was distinct and definite; and, that in truth, Christ not only existed before the times of Abraham, but existed in the knowledge and experience of his Church, and that to him all the Prophets have indeed borne witness. It must also be evident, that this system of faith had its rise, continuation, and consummation, in an exhibition of the *unmerited* mercies of God; and, that its first and last object was to meet, and provide for, the wants of intelligent creation. It is, perhaps, equally evident, that a moral law has also existed from a still earlier period, has been continued in all its rigour through the patriarchal and Mosaic times, has been pronounced *holy, just,*

and *good*, by the Apostle, and by him has also been said to be *established* by the Gospel. These combined systems have, throughout all ages, succeeded in producing the fruits of holiness and peace; and, as every service has been presented in the full exercise of obedience and assurance of faith, the blessings of time and of eternity have been dealt out with a liberal hand, and hosts innumerable have been added to the assembly of the first-born.

It has also been shewn from the nature of the case, that no other system can be effectual in first reducing, and then in duly elevating, the mind of man, so as to make him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of eternal life.—Our Scriptures moreover declare, that the kingdom of the Redeemer shall never fail; that it shall extend from sea to sea, from the river to the world's end; and that it shall remain as long as the sun and moon shall endure. And, as we have every reason to believe, that miraculous influences have now ceased, we have every ground for concluding, that our means of obedience and of grace are the same in character and intent with those made known in the earliest times; that they are full and complete in their requirements, means, and end; and in every respect permanent and unchangeable.

The last point we shall consider is, the suitableness and value of this view of the divine economy, as commenced, carried on, and completed, for our instruction, assurance, and final salvation. If we can suppose the Divine energies ever to have been thus exerted for the good of man, our next supposition must be, that they would be harmonious in their proceedings, and effective in their end: and this is what they peculiarly are. Our duties to God and to man are first authoritatively taught and urged. In the next place, the imperfections of our best services are clearly and strongly inculcated; the mercy of God is then proposed, and faith is demanded as the means whereby salvation shall finally be secured. Here the fullest exercise of all our best affections

and powers is both demanded and provided for, and sufficient aid afforded to raise the hope, and to realise the enjoyment of all that earth and heaven can afford; and, while the believer is forgetting what is behind, and reaching out for the acquisition of all that is before him, he is compelled to exclaim, (and this too forms one of his highest privileges and greatest enjoyments,) that the power is all of God; that Paul may plant, Apollos water, but that God giveth the increase, and that to his name is all the praise and the glory due.

Nor is this his ground of hope only of yesterday; it constitutes no new experiment now for the first time discovered and recommended: the believer can appeal to a cloud of witnesses, to an army of prophets, martyrs, saints; to an innumerable company whose faith, deeds, trials, expectations, have been witnessed and registered from the earliest times, and are still preserved for his instruction and comfort. In the first revelation he can read the promise made to the Fathers of that mysterious Child who was to be the King of kings and Lord of lords;—in the sufferings and experience of the first martyr, the testimony afforded that he pleased God, and that he lived by faith;—and in those of the first murderer, that he, like all his apostate followers, was but a vagabond and a wanderer upon the earth, an alien to the commonwealth of mercy, and was without hope and without God in the world. In like manner, will the walk of Enoch with God, the covenant and the mercy afforded to Noah, adoption into the family of Abraham, and the becoming a spiritual heir of the promises made to him when he saw the day of Christ and rejoiced, instruct, edify, encourage, and support him.—It would be endless to point out all the instances recorded in the Scriptures for the admonition and encouragement of the believer. They are to be found in every page of its history, laws, promises, predictions: and they have been revealed and perpetuated, that the man of God

might be perfect, and thoroughly finished to every good work : trained up to the full assurance of faith, and made meet to be a partaker of those glories which are still to be revealed.

There is, besides the suitableness and authority of all this, an unity of purpose, of means, and of experience, which must be highly satisfactory and convincing to the reasonable mind. Here we find the means, the end, the effects, universally the same. The mind of our God fixed and immutable ; His word constant and unvarying ; its instructions standing ever on the same grounds ; proposing the same means, obedience and faith ; the same Redeemer, the Lamb slain ; the same end, to reconcile God and man, and to insure every blessing of which the human soul stands in need. Here, too, we have nothing subtle, far-fetched, partial, or deceptive. Obedience to precepts intelligible and plain, is peremptorily demanded of all ; and the promise of that which is as valuable as it is necessary and durable, made sure to every heir of the family of faith. In Christ Jesus, the poor man can find a friend, an adviser, a brother, and a judge ; the rich, a counsellor and an example ; and all, a Prophet, Priest, and King ; a Redeemer, and an atonement for the sins that are past, and a Mediator with the Father, touched with the feelings of our infirmities, who has promised to provide us with all the blessings to come. With these things before us, both reason and faith demand, that we “ gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—“ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ : whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory : receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation

the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Heaven and earth cannot conspire to give you better laws, brighter promises, stronger assurances : God and man can scarcely afford you any thing more easy of comprehension, more suitable or more encouraging, than are the precepts and the promises, which originally grew out of the mercy, and which finally conspire to advance the glory, of the man Christ Jesus. By whom indeed all things were created and made ; and to whom be ascribed, as is most due, all glory, honour, might, majesty, and praise.

DISSERTATION I.

PART I.

SECTION I.

ON THE USE OF REASON, THE NATURE OF SCIENCE, &c., IN DISCUSSING
QUESTIONS RELATING TO RELIGION, WITH REFERENCE TO THE SYSTEM
OF RATIONALISM AS TAUGHT IN THE MODERN SCHOOL OF GERMANY, &c.

IN order to meet the rationalists of the German school, as well as to investigate the grounds of doubt often met with among our own free-thinkers (for the principle is in each case one and the same), it is my intention first to consider the office of right reason generally, and then to shew, that notwithstanding the professions of this school as to the progress of science, the exercise of reason, and that their creed alone can be reconciled therewith, right reason is, in truth, on the side of what has been termed the ancient and orthodox faith. In this inquiry I shall have nothing to do with the honesty or dishonesty of this or that individual,—nothing to advance or prove on the extent to which rationalism may have spread itself in Germany or elsewhere,—nor any thing to recommend or to condemn, as to the human means whereby this may be effectually controlled, or under which it may have assumed its present shape and character. These questions I leave in the hands of Mr. Rose, who is fully competent to discuss them. It will be my business to examine the system, both in principle and detail, which he has not professedly done; and to propose and recommend, as far as I may be able, what I conceive to be principles which have reason and fact for their foundation, and which are, therefore, the most likely to further the cause of truth.

To commence, then, with the very beginning of our inquiry, let us suppose a book lately to have been dis-

covered professing to contain matter of the highest possible moment, both in a religious and moral point of view ; and, if we also suppose ourselves to be tolerably well acquainted with the language in which it happens to be written, our first question will be, In what way ought we to conduct the inquiry which is to ascertain the real value of this document ? We will not, in the commencement of this inquiry, suppose ourselves to be entirely destitute of either morality or science ; but, on the contrary, and in order to give every advantage to our opponents, we will allow morality, together with every human science, to have arrived at that state in which we now find them. It will, however, be important here to determine what we mean by the terms *morality* and *science* ; otherwise misunderstandings may arise, which may greatly retard and embarrass our question.

By morality then we mean, The knowledge of those fundamental truths relating to human conduct, which experience has shewn to be advantageous to society, or, in other words, of those laws both public and private, which have either been positively enacted, ratified, and published, or have otherwise obtained currency by common consent, for the purpose of regulating the conduct of individuals in every possible relation of life.

By science we mean, The knowledge of those truths which are capable of demonstration, and which have been confirmed by an appeal to experiment. To nothing short of this last can we allow the name of *science* ; because, in nothing else can we possess that which truly deserves the name of *knowledge*. In other cases, probabilities may run so high as to command an implicit confidence ; but still they are probabilities and nothing more ;—they can never amount to *knowledge*, and, according to our notions, cannot lay claim to the name of *science*. It must be observed, however, that innumerable questions may arise, in which only one or other of these can be brought to bear with any prospect of success. Upon some, science can exert no useful influence ; and such are those which are generally termed *moral* : and, on the other hand, those which belong purely to science can never be judged of by the doctrines of right and wrong, as taught by morality. No one in his senses would, I presume, attempt to calculate an eclipse of the sun by any

moral postulate or law whatever ; nor, on the other hand, would any one venture to judge of the justness or not of any moral conclusion, by the formulæ framed for the purpose of calculating an eclipse : for this reason — the questions themselves rest on grounds altogether at variance with each other, and are essentially different. If, therefore, we would in any case insure a satisfactory conclusion, we must be guided in our investigations by methods suited to its particular character. In other words, we must, in questions relating to morality, be content with probabilities only ; not because we would fix our standard any lower than the nature of the case will bear, but because it is impossible here to have demonstration : and when this is the fact (and it is so in every question relating to morality), we must not expect *knowledge*,—probability is all that can be had. But when this runs high, or so high as not to admit of a reasonable doubt to the contrary, we are as much bound to receive it, as we are to admit the clearest demonstration to be found in the purest science.

We have hitherto spoken of pure science only, or what is sometimes termed the pure mathematics. Now, if we proceed one step farther in science (and this we must do in order to reduce it to the purposes of life), we shall find that its results can claim a character no higher than that of *probability*, and in which an appeal to experiment alone can justify their adoption. In mechanics, for example, the imperfection of machinery is such as to render every thing like mathematical precision an object quite out of nature ; and the same may be said of optics. In hydrostatics, the primary laws of resistance, as far as yet ascertained, do not amount to any thing much better than conjecture ; and the consequence is, the mean, out of a considerable number of experiments, is the only result that can be relied on with any degree of confidence : this is also the case in mechanics and optics ; and therefore all we can say of the results arrived at, either in astronomy, projectiles, or, indeed, in any other branch of mixed science, will amount to nothing better than *probabilities*. It is not meant to be asserted that these probabilities will be weak or unconvincing, but only that they can be recommended to adoption with no degree of confidence, unless arrived at with the greatest care, and

every allowance have been made for the errors of observation — of the instruments — and of the various other circumstances connected therewith, which, however, can never be exactly ascertained. In chemistry, medicine, and some other sciences, no primary laws have yet been determined: these may, therefore, be considered as experimental rather than positive sciences, and so far liable to all the uncertainty usually attendant on the process of experiment. Science, therefore, as well as morality, when reduced to practice, can claim nothing better to recommend it than a *high degree of probability*; but to this we are bound to give our assent, not because the result is absolutely, but physically, certain; just as in morality, not because the result we may have obtained is demonstrably, but morally, true.

Let us now offer a few remarks on that which has been sometimes termed *the science of sciences*; namely, metaphysics, for by this religious and moral truth is sometimes judged. Here, then, the mode of inquiry usually resorted to, consists of a comparison and induction of particulars carried on through the medium of words, from which results are obtained that may or may not be within the reach of experiment. Of those which are within the reach of experiment or experience (which is here the same thing), little doubt, perhaps, will be entertained as to their truth or falsehood; and so far we shall always have sufficient grounds for knowing, whether they ought to be received or rejected: but when we rise to speculations involving the character of the Deity, the nature and destinies of the human soul, and the like, all of which will admit of no corrections from experiment, the utmost we can arrive at must be, *probabilities* far inferior to those arrived at by the application of the sciences, or even to those moral results which admit of correction by experience. For this obvious reason — those notions, which are not obtained immediately through the senses (which, indeed, present the most perfect means of knowledge within our reach), but are acquired by induction carried on through mediums of the steadiness of which there may be reason to doubt, or in the application of which we may often err, can never give their possessor an assurance that he has arrived at the truth, to such a degree, at least, as to be applicable to the purposes of further

ratiocination and inquiry. In every case, then, I think it will be allowed, that all the *probability* which is really due to such results ought to be ascribed to them, and no more; rising, it may be, from the lowest to the highest, just as the errors likely to attend the process can be cleared away or not; and allowing to the highest our belief, which it will truly deserve, and to the lowest, so much of our assent as will not be likely to involve the loss of some real good.

A man may, however, refuse his assent to every proposition not capable of demonstration; and such anomalies are sometimes to be met with, notwithstanding the fact, that no such capability exists except in the pure mathematics; and the additional one, that every day's life of such individual will virtually prove that he holds no such thing. Others again may be simple enough to believe every thing, however improbable, absurd, or even impossible; and some of this class too, are occasionally to be met with in the vast variety about us. I will only affirm here, however, what I believe every one will allow to be just, that neither of these characters can be said to be reasonable; but, that the truly rational man is to be found at the greatest distance from these extremes.

SECTION II.

ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINES, &c. PROPOSED IN
THE REVELATION.

HAVING stated, then, what we mean when we speak of morality,—of science, pure or mixed, and the right use of reason; we may now proceed with our examination of the book supposed at our outset to have been discovered.

Now I think it may be granted, that if such book has been found, it ought to submit to an investigation as to the question, whether it really is, or is not, the book which it professes to be,—a book containing matter of the highest importance to man. I say, we ought to have good reason for believing that this is not, like many other such claims made, an imposition calculated rather to do mischief than good; and whether it is not, in the very first step it takes,

advancing a falsehood, in order to secure its admission among us. Some will say, perhaps, that this will be allowing human reason too much,—that it will be erecting it into a tribunal on what may turn out to be the word of God; and eventually to advance the wisdom of the creature at the expense of that of the Creator. My answer is, I believe not. We are justified in going so far only as human reason, rightly applied, will carry us; and this, not for the purpose of condemning statements, which such book may contain, and which may have been unknown to us before, but only to ascertain whether, as far as we have knowledge mathematical, physical, or moral, such work does, or does not, contain the useful and highly important matter to which it lays claim. On the supposition, indeed, of such book containing information with which we were not previously acquainted, we may perhaps affirm, that this will constitute no inconsiderable reason for making the proposed inquiry: because in this case, as indeed in every other for which inquiries are usually undertaken and carried on, our stock of knowledge may be greatly augmented. The novelty of the matter, therefore, which may thus be presented to us, will be so far from forming any reason why we should forbear, that it will, on the contrary, constitute a very cogent one for proceeding with our proposed investigation.

I shall now suppose our inquiry commenced, and that we have ascertained the fact, that our book professes to contain one of the simplest, purest, best-supported, and most authoritative systems of morality the world has ever seen; recommended too, not only because it is good, but because both present and eternal felicity are affirmed to be the undoubted consequence; and urging accordingly, that every sacrifice, even that of life itself if necessary, be made in order to comply with the precept, and for the purpose of securing the end proposed.

A question will now very naturally arise, as to how far the writers of such a work could be authorised, in making these declarations so positively. Supposing they had no other means of information than those which we possess, it may truly be affirmed, that they must have been arrant impostors. No man living, we know, has information sufficient to speak thus positively on points so far removed

from human experience. It may be said, indeed, that something like the matter thus proposed is probable, but nothing more can; and the consequence must be, that if these writers offer their instruction, on grounds no better than conjecture, morality, or even metaphysics, the whole ought to be branded as a forgery: because we know that neither the one nor the other can arrive at any such results; and, as for the other sciences, they are conversant about no such things. Besides, how good soever the morality recommended may be, it will be a very bad recommendation to it to be ushered into the world with the stamp of imposture upon its face.

Upon a little inquiry, however, we shall find that a higher claim is actually made; and further, that it is most clearly stated, that man as such, has not the means of knowing these things. So far, then, there is no mistake or falsehood discoverable as to the grounds on which these truths, if in reality they are such, are proposed and recommended. Let us now advert to a few other particulars offered on the same grounds, then inquire into their reasonableness; and lastly, investigate the grounds themselves on which these are proposed.

In addition, then, to the morality and the rewards and punishments annexed to it, found in the Scriptures already noticed, we are informed, that God created all things visible and invisible; and that man, which is the only rational agent known to us, is likewise the work of his hands;—that this rational being was, indeed, once placed in a state liable to none of the difficulties to which he is now exposed, but that, in consequence of an act of disobedience, no matter what that was, he was thus reduced. It goes on to tell us, that he is in reality much worse in practice than in knowledge, and in no respect fit to stand in the presence of his maker.

It should seem from these statements, that whatever be the authority on which they are made, they do not appear to be put forth for the mere purpose of obtaining currency in the world. Men, whatever else they are, (and they have some truly noble qualities), are not generally pleased with dissertations against the human intellect, or the merit to be attached to human virtue; nor are they very suddenly led to adopt notions tending to make them less pleased with them-

selves than it is natural for them to be. To the relation, indeed, that God made the world, and placed man in a state of greater general comfort than he is now found, nothing perhaps very strong can be objected; though many questions may be started of which our Book says nothing. Whether, for example, any other creation took place before this; or whether any and what worlds, had actually been created before, or were then brought into being?—Whether any and what rational beings, similar, superior, or inferior to ourselves, were then, or at any other time, likewise created?—And lastly, if there be another state of existence, where that will be found, and what will be the precise nature of those who will be placed in it? It may be answered, once for all, that no such questions as these are decided, discussed, or even hinted at: the end had in view seems to have been, at once to afford the most useful information, and to give weight to the precepts delivered, for the purpose, as it should seem, of insuring compliance, and which, it is positively declared, have been revealed for the good of man. That other worlds may have been formed, and other beings created, ages before this state of things had an existence, is probable enough; and that others may still be going on, is neither unreasonable nor repugnant to this Book: but, as it offers nothing whatever on these subjects, nothing can be said either for or against it on their account. To the existence of other rational beings, indeed, it occasionally refers; but here it affords us no curious particulars as to their origin, characters, or end; and, as there appears to be nothing in all this repugnant to our reason, we must refer its credibility solely to the question of authority, which will hereafter be considered.

Having stated, then, that man is a very imperfect creature, liable to much mistake, error, and sin, (which, indeed, experience abundantly assures us is the fact), our Book goes on to tell us, that God who takes cognizance of this, and considers it as transgression against his law, has, nevertheless, from the merciful and gracious character which he sustains, proposed a means, by which he will extend a full pardon to the offender, freely adopt him as one of his own family and children, and finally bring him into a better state of existence: by which seems to be meant, that he will act towards such an one as a father, and not as a judge—that he will provide

him with every thing necessary for this life, and also for that which we are told is to come.

We may here remark, that how far soever this may be removed above human means or human power, there does not seem to be *any thing unreasonable* in it, or unbecoming the great and manifestly benevolent Being who is the author of our nature. It is true, indeed, that we neither know nor read of any such provision as this made for the inferior creatures by which we are surrounded; but then they do not seem to be at all calculated to form any estimate of such a good. If they cannot reason and feel as we do on privations, hopes, fears, sufferings, and the like, it is because they have not faculties given them either to appreciate the remedy or to lament its loss. This is probable; but the truth is, we know nothing, or next to nothing, on the subject. In our case, then (and this is all which concerns us), the provision, if there be such, is not only good, but it is that which every reasonable being cannot be too anxious to make his own; and, for which, when acquired, he cannot be too thankful. Sinner as he confessedly is, nothing short of the mercy of the Deity can propose his pardon: transgressor as he is, grace alone can rescue him from the penalty of a righteous law, and enable him to entertain a reasonable hope of acceptance. We may here conclude, then, that whatever may be said on this subject, the end proposed is so far from being unreasonable, that it should rather seem unreasonable a benevolent and wise Creator should not have made provision for it; and if it can be shewn, that there can be no doubt of his having made this provision, it will follow that we are bound to accept it with all thankfulness.

The conditions generally proposed in our Scriptures are, in the next place, an entire belief and a hearty compliance with all its requirements. One particular point, and this is made very prominent, is a belief in the mission of a person termed in some places "the Anointed or Christ," in others "the Son of God," and in others "the Saviour," &c. in all which however, there can be no doubt the same person is meant. This person, we are told, is worthy of all honour; that he is our Redeemer, that is, that he did, by one great act of suffering, redeem us from the penalty due to our transgressions; that he also left us an example of life, no less than

many excellent discourses, calculated to instruct us in our several duties ; and further, that he promised an extraordinary help or assistance should be given to those who would comply with the requirements of his divine law.

Now, whatever may be said of these doctrines, or of the grounds on which they are proposed, one thing is perfectly clear; namely, that the object aimed at in every case is the good of man: so far all is plain, and certainly not *unreasonable*, because it is in perfect unison with the general dealings of God with his creatures. As to the extraordinary assistance promised in the last, the very frail and peccable nature of man points it out as absolutely necessary, when we know that a life more conformable with the moral law, as revealed in our Scriptures, is actually called for. That it is above the power of man to afford such assistance, the very terms used are sufficient to shew ; but that it is *unreasonable* such should be promised, and even given, if the Deity have indeed any concern in this matter, is what no one can for a moment suppose, much less attempt to prove.

With reference to the Redeemer's suffering for others, all we shall now say is: If this was undertaken, as it is stated to be, from a pure and unmerited regard to man, it was indeed an act worthy of the most exalted nature — an instance such as has never been equalled on earth, and is never likely to be: and if this was intended, as we are told it was, to make known the more than parental love of God to his creatures, we shall have an additional reason for believing, that HE is not only merciful and good, but merciful and good in a degree far exceeding our ordinary notions and experience.

SECTION III.

ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

A GRAVE question, however, may be, and is frequently, mooted here ; namely, Why did a merciful Deity lay the sins of many upon a righteous and sinless being? I can only say, It does not appear to be stated, that God did forcibly lay the sins of the world upon our sinless Redeemer ; but

only that *he took upon himself* the chastisement due to us. This I deem an important distinction as to the statements made, although it may not be in my power to give a full explanation as to every particular connected with them. From the manner, however, in which this doctrine is generally stated, we may, I think, come to the conclusion, that although there are some things exceeding our knowledge, there are none repugnant to our reason, and certainly none opposed to the decisions of science.

In the first place, then, we are taught, that our Redeemer took this office, together with its sufferings, upon himself, out of pure mercy, and in order to secure our pardon. This, I think, may be termed kind, merciful, and good; but not unreasonable. Any man of wealth among ourselves may, from the impulse of kindness or philanthropy, take upon himself to discharge the debts contracted by another; and this he may do, without incurring the charge of being unreasonable. And, indeed, unless some such acts of grace as this occasionally took place, we might justly conclude, that there really exists nothing like virtue in the world. The principle, therefore, is good: and it is one that is not only frequently acted upon among us, but is held up as worthy of all acceptance.

It may be asked, in the next place, Is it reasonable that the sacrifice of a sinless being can be accepted under any circumstance? I answer, if any such atoning sacrifice be offered at all, it must necessarily be that of a sinless being. In the case above adduced, the man of wealth alone is the man who can discharge the debts of another. If he be himself a debtor, it will be both unreasonable and absurd to expect such sacrifice from him: because this will be to expect that which it is not in his power to afford. So in the case of the Redeemer: were he himself a sinner, he might suffer for his own sins, and this is all he could possibly do; no punishment received by him in such a case could administer the least advantage to any other person, because the sacrifice thus made must be inadequate to the end proposed. That it must be a sinless person, therefore, who must redeem others, if they are to be redeemed at all, there can be no doubt; and so far we have nothing repugnant to reason in this doctrine, but perfectly consonant with it; and

the only question that can remain on this head must be, Whether life ought at all to be sacrificed in such a case? But, in order to enter fully into this consideration, the end proposed to be attained ought first to be estimated; for if this end be not such as to warrant so great a sacrifice, then will its tender be unreasonable; and, on the other hand, if be, it will follow, that even to sacrifice life will be both reasonable and right.

Now the end proposed is, *the eternal salvation of all men*, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; and the question is, Is it unreasonable, that one human life shall be sacrificed for the purpose of attaining an end such as this? The question now is, not whether any other means of salvation may or may not have been devised; nor whether one more or less suitable to the dictates of human reason may not have been had recourse to. It certainly was in the power of Omnipotence to devise other means; but whether even He could have devised such as would have insured universal acceptance, without at the same time forcibly controlling the human will, might be questionable. Our question is this, and this only, Whether that proposed is or is not reasonable? In answer to the question, then, Whether it is reasonable that one human life should be sacrificed for the salvation of the souls of all? I would say, if it appear that no other means can be resorted to (and this appears to be the case here), then a moment's doubt cannot possibly be entertained on the subject. So far from being reasonable, it would be madness to hesitate; especially when we are assured, that the loss of human life, in this case, did not also involve the loss of the soul. Sacrifices such as this have been made times innumerable, for purposes of infinitely less value, and where the probability of insuring the end proposed was far from convincing. The reasonableness, and indeed the wisdom, shewn on these occasions, has been appealed to by the majority in every age and country, and is still held up, in the example of our patriots, as matter for the admiration and imitation of all succeeding times. Let it not be supposed, however, that the propriety or goodness of this or that example is contended for in every case, but only that such sacrifices are reasonable, when there are also good grounds for believing that some good end shall thus be secured.

Such, then, our Scripture manifestly proposes; and this is the only question now before us: it will be for us to inquire, in another place, whether Scripture itself ought to be regarded in such cases. It is not unreasonable, then, that a sinless, or, in other words, an acceptable Being, be sacrificed, if it is certainly known that the eternal salvation of all men can thereby be attained. The only question, perhaps, that now can be put, must be something like the following: Is it agreeable to human reason, that the Deity should require such a sacrifice to be made? which, to say the best of it, is an impious and daring question. But as it is sometimes proposed, we will undertake to shew that it is not unreasonable he should.

We will suppose, then, in the first place (what all will allow to be the fact), that God's law, even as it may be read in the book of nature, is by the majority daily and hourly transgressed. Now, how ought this to be met on the part of the Deity? Justice requires that he should condemn all at least who do so. What that condemnation would be, we need not now inquire, but may take for granted that it is something not desirable, which is the very lowest ground we can take. This, then, is the course which justice must undoubtedly take. But, suppose the Deity is also merciful: and this we have a right to suppose. In this case, then, what can be done? He may, I suppose, like any man of wealth, remit the debt in every case; or he may allow of such payment as may be within the power of some one or of all to make. But to remit the debt, in every case indiscriminately, would be effectually to thwart the end of the moral law; and, for all to pay it, would be to require an impossibility, and entirely to annihilate every idea of mercy and of redemption. Our only resource, therefore, must be some solvent person, who may be both able and willing to discharge the mighty debt in question; and thus to place the debtor in a situation of pardon and of acceptance with God. Among men, however, no such being can be found; because we are told, "all have sinned;" and, if this be the case, men as such, must be considered as in a state of entire bankruptcy, with regard to this question. Still, there may be one found among a higher order of beings both able and willing to place himself in a situation, such as to meet the

circumstances of this case, and thus at once to satisfy God's moral law, and to throw open the gates of mercy to man. And such, our Book declares, is the person of Christ, and such the work of his atonement for our sins. Whatever, then, may be said of this scheme of redemption, one thing we are sure is certain, namely, that it is intelligible, applicable, and good. Why it has been chosen, it may be impossible for us to say; but we can say that, as it appears from our Scriptures to have been chosen, it must have originated purely in the desire to shew mercy; at once to honour and give effect to the moral law of God, and to afford a ground of hope to every awakened sinner on earth.

But it may still be urged, that it is unreasonable one should be accepted for all,—justice requires that every man suffer for his own sins. This, I answer, is true on some views of our question, but not on all; particularly with reference to the Scriptures and matter of fact, about which we are speaking. For we are told, that “through the sins of one man, judgment came on all men to condemnation:” that is, our first father having transgressed God's law, his offspring, as it is the case in all human society, became losers in one way or other on this account; but for which, laws as such, could make no provision. It was purely an act of mercy, therefore, in the Judge, and that attempered with justice, to allow the remedy to be applied in a similar way; and, what is very remarkable, this remedy was proposed at the very time the transgression took place; in order, as it should seem, that the avenue of mercy should never be closed. This part of our system, therefore, taking it as it is, is so far from being unreasonable, that it seems to be the only reasonable one, by which such a remedy could be provided as would meet all the circumstances of the case. In the first instance we were placed in a situation, and that by the transgression of another, from which no effort of our own could rescue us; in the last, we have means offered adequate to secure a recovery from the whole injury inflicted, and this proposed by one who, we are told, was himself not only without sin, but was also able and willing to redeem us from the consequence of ours. Here then we have an adaptation of the remedy to the disease,—of payment to the debt contracted; in short, of mercy attempered with justice, such as

not only to meet all reasonable expectation, but also such as, in cases in some respects similar, has ever been resorted to in the dealings of man with man. On what authority all this rests, and whether it is or is not sufficient, and even binding on all to accede thereto, will be seen hereafter. Our conclusion for the present is, that there is in this nothing unreasonable; but, on the contrary, every thing calculated to honour the law, exalt in the highest possible degree the mercy and goodness of God, to raise the hopes, and to stimulate to action the best energies of man.

A few other objections may be, and are indeed often, made on this subject, which it may be right here to notice. It may be said, that the first sentence of the law is still complied with: death still passes upon all men, notwithstanding the atonement said to be made. True, I answer; the mercy just spoken of "is not," to use the words of our Scripture, "against the law." The law still takes its course; and this it does too to its full extent, wherever it is not disarmed by the more excellent system of mercy. Men still die, and they all die through the transgression of their first parent; but by the provision made by their second, or what in our Scripture it styled "the second Adam," they have the promise of an "*eternal life*" to be enjoyed beyond the grave. This appears to have originated purely in mercy, and under the system of grace just alluded to. Before the first transgression took place, there was, as far as we can see, no knowledge much less an expectation of this in a higher state of being; and, if eternal life on the earth was then to be the boon to follow upon a strict observance of the precept, the change introduced is manifestly for the best, the only difficulties we have now to do with being, to suffer afflictions patiently for a season, to look, by an exertion of faith, to another and better state of things, and, last of all, to pass the ordeal of death, in order to realise this "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This distant scene and season of reward has, however, this truly great inconvenience in it, it is removed into an unknown state of being; and what man, in his first estate, could not perform acceptably for a day perhaps, it is now expected he should do continually in the face of all the temptations, which a world dead in trespasses and sin can present to his view. We shall shew, here-

after, however, that sufficient provision is also made for this, and that such as it is most reasonable to expect would be. To submit to death, therefore, can never be considered grievous to him, who knows how justly he has deserved it, upon the very best supposition. To this just sentence no reasonable man can object; and, if he happen to be of the number of those, who have not failed to avail themselves of the provision made in our Scripture for this case, he will most likely be inclined to follow a very bright example therein mentioned, who said, *It is far better to depart and to be with Christ*. Such an one cannot but be convinced, that this is a state in which real happiness is not to be found; and, therefore, whatever earthly ties it may possess, he will never regret to leave it.

Another question may be, Was, then, this atonement made for all in this point of view, namely, "*as all die, even so shall all be made alive?*" or, in other words, as all men are now subject to death without exception, shall all, as necessarily and without exception, be admitted to eternal glory through the efficacy of the atonement? I answer, however analogical this may appear, it is nevertheless both unreasonable and unscriptural. Characters capable of no moral responsibility may, indeed, if there were such, fall properly enough under such a category; but men are no such creatures as these. We have some notions of right and wrong, even by the light of nature, and faculties capable of being raised, under a good system of instruction, to a surprising degree of knowledge and of virtue. In this case, then (and such is the case we have all along supposed), it would be of unreasonable things the most unreasonable to suppose, that the virtuous and the vicious should fare alike,—that those who "*by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and eternal life,*" should, after all, be placed only on a par with others, who have been the pest of the world and the curse of society. This would be, to argue for the reasonableness of disregarding every moral law of right and wrong, and to recommend virtue only for the merit of its sufferings, and the hopelessness of its reward or redress in any state of being. Besides, the doctrine of the atonement, connected as it is with the expectation of a future life, demands a belief at least in every one who aspires to the privileges proposed in

Scripture; and if a belief, then also an entire submission to every precept it shall unfold, as a condition to be complied with: and this will involve its morality; not with the view indeed of meriting the boon had in prospect, but of affording that obedience, which, it may be presumed, is quite consistent with the character of the rational beings with which our Scripture has to do. Taking man then such as he is, not what he might have been, we have as yet discovered nothing unreasonable in the doctrines of our Scripture; but, on the contrary, that which alone appears to be likely to make him, what his endowments declare he ought to be, a good member of society, a happy man, and a consistent cultivator of the requirements both of nature and of grace.

There may be, and often is, a further and indeed summary objection made to the whole of this argument, which is this: To suppose a system of this sort at all necessary to the councils and proceedings of Omnipotence, is to suppose something very far beneath the dignity of such a being. I answer: No doubt need for a moment be entertained as to the question, whether Omnipotence might not have had recourse to other methods, quite as well suited as that in question to secure man's eternal salvation. It never can be our duty to limit Omnipotence, particularly in cases about which we can have no knowledge, and over which we have no control. Other means, we grant, might have been devised suitable to the attainment of this end; but, if one has been devised which appears to be adequate to bring it about, and one which has confessedly originated in mercy, it is surely our duty to be thankful for it, rather than to set about devising another, and thus to resist both the wisdom and power of the Almighty. In the general ordinances of our Scripture, whether they be the best which could possibly have been devised or not (which we can never say), there is a suitableness to our state and wants which cannot but very strongly recommend them to our acceptance. In the present case, for example, we can have no doubt that guilty creatures ought to be punished; and we know from experience, that this consideration has a very powerful effect in regulating the affairs of society, and in promoting the good of all. But in cases of sincere repentance, it would

be extremely hard, were there no means of escaping, or of alleviating, the decisions of the Judge. Now, in another's willingly becoming our ransom,—spontaneously undergoing the punishment due to our transgressions, and thus placing us in a new situation in the estimation of our Maker, justified from all things, and adopted as his children in a peculiar sense; we see not only mercy in the Creator, but kindness and love in the Redeemer, the most powerful, the most persuasive, the most disinterested. This, then, as it is suitable, so is it delightful; as it is necessary, so is it seasonable; and as it is free, so is it certain. * Humility will give it an entrance, Faith a full assurance, Grace a permanency, universality, and acceptableness, which nothing can sully, shake, or injure. In life it will constitute a *peace which passeth all understanding*; in death, a resignation and a hope unparalleled under any other circumstances; and when this last conflict shall be over, *a crown and a kingdom which fadeth not away*.

Whatever, then, might be said or thought of such other means of salvation as might possibly have been devised, that which our Scripture recommends to our regard is one which we can at least understand, admire, and love. It is one which is in unison with the other works of the Creator; with this only difference, that while they astonish, overwhelm, and perplex, this instructs, raises, and supports; while other things indeed proclaim Him to be unsearchable in wisdom and mighty in operation, this declares in accents never to be misunderstood, that *God is love*.

SECTION IV.

ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

JUST as the doctrine of the atonement is connected with that of the salvation of the soul, so is that of the resurrection of the body with the resurrection of the body of Christ. We now proceed to consider the reasonableness of these in their order.

With reference to the immortality of the soul, nothing with

which we are conversant can lead us to any certain conclusion respecting it. Nature, as such, knows nothing whatever on the subject; and, although philosophers have come to conclusions, which may carry with them something like probability, it is quite certain from the doubts with which these have been met by others, as well as the hollowness of the grounds on which they rest, that either these probabilities were considered weak, or, at best, that the end anticipated was such as to produce no salutary effect on society. In the book, however, which we have been considering, this question rests on very different grounds, as indeed do all its other doctrines. We are there assured of this, as of an event about which there can be no doubt; as an end to which the believer can with certainty direct his view, and of which he is cautioned above all things never to lose sight. In this scene of being, trials, mortifications, sufferings, are constantly dwelt on, as the portion of the true disciple: and when we consider what the character of such an one is expected to be, there can be no doubt from the very nature of things, that such will be his portion: history informs us that it ever has been; and reason concludes that it always must be: and so (whether true or false is not now the question), it is but reasonable, that another state should be pointed out, dwelt upon, and continually enforced, with the greatest earnestness.

But let us come more immediately to our question, and let us suppose ourselves now to be in the situation only, which the ancient heathens were, highly polished as a nation, great in the arts of commerce and of war; and not inferior to them in all the sciences. Now it may be asked, Is there any thing in the belief or experience of such a people, calculated to raise the mind of man to the high tone of moral virtue and happiness of which it is confessedly capable? The only motives to virtue in such a state of things, must be some one or more of the following, viz. the desire of insuring wealth, influence, or fame. Virtue has indeed been proposed both in ancient and modern times, as something so truly lovely in itself, as to be motive sufficient for regulating the lives of all who are capable of discovering and estimating its worth. This discovery, however, is but seldom made; and when it is, is perhaps still more rarely acted upon. Few

have philosophy enough to put virtue, whatever be its charms, in competition with influence; and the consequence has been, that this theoretic beauty has invariably been called in as a subordinate help to the more popular idolatry of wealth, influence, and fame. Leagued with these, and in professions and appearance at least (for here it can go no further), it has usually been put under contribution, and made to wage continual war upon its own community; and thus like those decoy birds and beasts, which have been schooled for the purpose of destroying their own species, and to promote the wealth of their possessors, has perhaps more effectually contributed to serve the cause of vice, than all the efforts of its professed ministers could ever do. Let us take, therefore, what every one knows to be the only efficient motives to human action, independent of positive commands from above, namely, wealth, influence, and fame; and let us consider in what way these are calculated, either singly or combined, to raise the tone of moral virtue, and to make man what he ought to be, just and good.

It is generally, and indeed very justly, held, that "*honesty is the best policy*;" that the effects of vice are to prey upon and to ruin its admirers. And the truth is, society is so constituted, as naturally to bring about these results. If, indeed, there were no security, then must there be an entire end to industry, and the consequence inevitably be universal poverty and woe. So far, there can be no debatable question. When, however, we come to inquire how far a mere regard to public honesty will generally go, especially when any shorter and more expeditious way to wealth, influence, or fame, presents itself, and take into consideration the facility with which deceit may be practised, especially on the more generous; we shall have no difficulty in coming to a conclusion, as to whence have originated human laws, public distress and distrust, with their inseparable companion, individual misery. We shall discover, what experience has in every state and nation so circumstanced shewn to be the fact, that the community is in the main dishonest; and that moral virtue is, at the best, scarcely any thing more than a name. Address and management (which imply caution in doing nothing to offend against established customs) have

ever been found to do more for a man in one moment, perhaps, than years of the most indefatigable industry, profound science, or skill in the arts, could bring about ; and hence, the less expert in these particulars have not only usually occupied the lower ranks of life, whatever else might be their pretensions, but even this, which in such a case ought rather to be made a measure of their virtue, has also been made decisive as to their deficiencies in intellectual, scientific, or moral attainments. Cunning, artifice, and intrigue, are crimes not cognizable to national laws. Moralists have hitherto devised no means by which these can be detected, exposed, and duly censured. Flattery, which is perhaps the most insidious and successful enemy to virtue, seldom fails of finding access to the heart in one shape or other : for alas ! human penetration is here unequal to the task of dividing the true from the false. Men can judge only by appearances ; and where nothing more certain can be appealed to, these may deceive us. Truth, too, is generally less anxious about consequences, and less active in recommending its own cause, than vice and falsehood are found to be : and where this is the case, management and address must and will prevail. The reason is obvious ; the best human motives to action involve no law which will reach beyond appearances : and, as appearances are more easily urged, than the less obvious and perhaps less inviting realities may be, the most expert in doing this must necessarily be the most successful in furthering his own ambitious, and otherwise uncontrolled, projects.

Now, it may be affirmed, that not only in heathen states must this be the case, but every where, and for the same reasons, where respect to a future state, and the fear of a heart-searching God, do not control and regulate the mind and the life. Every thing short of this must leave the man the dupe to circumstances, and the slave of deceit. Wealth, influence, and consideration, will be the ruling motives of his heart and of his conduct ; and either vaunting success, or hopeless disappointment, or both, will as necessarily be his inseparable companions.

If then human knowledge, as such, has nothing better than this to propose, and the testimony of ages may be cited to prove the fact ; is it not reasonable, that something should

have been made known by the Author of our nature, likely to raise the mind of man to that height of moral feeling and of enjoyment, of which it is capable; and without which its capacities must have been given in vain? Is it reasonable, that a being endued with powers so marvellous in their extent, and admitting of such a variety in their application, should have been called into being, only to lament his success or discomfiture in every stage of his existence, and in every day of his experience? To court, it may be and to mourn over, the blandishments of wealth, their inefficiency, and want of duration—the uncertainty of popularity, and even the worthlessness of fame; to fear and admire the unostentatious retreat of indigent, despised, and inflexible, honesty; and to envy and to vilify the conscience void of offence, if such were to be found. To have created, I say, and to have left man thus destitute of motives to honourable exertion, and of the means of real and permanent happiness, would surely have been an anomaly in the Divine proceedings. Philosophy must, in this case, have had nothing to which it could aspire; virtue nothing worth contending for; and life itself have eventually been scarcely worth the trouble and expense of its support. The doctrine of a future life, then, being, as it is, the best and indeed the only efficient motive to human virtue, as well as the only source of real happiness, involving too, as it does, no impossibility in the event proposed, is surely most necessary and most reasonable: and, if it can be shewn, which we shall do hereafter, that it is well grounded, it will, perhaps, be difficult to say, in what way a rational being can excuse himself from adopting it as a point of faith.

SECTION V.

ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINE RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION
OF THE BODY.

THAT human knowledge or reason can come to no immediate conclusion as to the certainty, or not, of this event, is a truth, to which, perhaps, no objection can be made. Analogy may indeed be resorted to, by way of illustration, and

this has been frequently and successfully done ; but analogy can go no further : and therefore here, as in our last question, authority alone must determine what is right or wrong. Our only question, however, now is, whether there is or not any thing unreasonable in the doctrine itself, as proposed for belief in the pages of our Scriptures : and this we now proceed to consider.

In the first place, then, we need not dwell upon the fact of the death and consequent dissolution of the body : our first question will therefore be (grounded on this fact), whether it is credible or not, this mass can again be recalled into life, and put in possession of all the faculties which it once possessed ? My answer is : Supposing Omnipotence to undertake to do this, I know of no reason why we are to suppose the event itself impossible, or even improbable. He who first created the body and formed it out of the dust, may, for aught we know, again vest it with life and sensibility : and if he have some beneficent end to bring about by this event, perhaps no arguments can be produced to shew that it is improbable. Other difficulties, however, have been started, of which the following seems to be the most formidable. If, it is urged, this identical body is with all its members hereafter to be raised to life, how, upon the supposition of various parts of it having been deposited in different parts of the earth, or devoured by the beasts or the fishes, is the identity to consist or to be known ? Are the parts, for instance, so separated, again to be brought together, bone to its bone, sinew to its sinew, and so on in every other particular ? And then, when the improbability of this seems to be established, a conclusion is made, that no such thing can reasonably be expected to come to pass, and, consequently, that the doctrine itself is incredible. I believe I have stated this argument with all the force usually ascribed to it by its advocates. Let us now see how far it is, or is not, conclusive.

In the first place, then, the *perfect identity* of matter here contended for, seems to me to be an unnecessary and unreasonable condition. If, indeed, I am again to be endued with a body, composed out of all, or only part of, the matter, which constitutes that I now possess, having still the same powers, feelings, and capacities, extended and improved it may

be to an indefinite degree ; it can be of little importance to me, whether there is to be an *entire identity* with all the former matter composing it or not. For, it may be asked, who can tell how little of the composition, which any one as an infant brings into the world, continues with him to the most extended age, and then descends with him to the grave ?

Perfect identity, then, seems scarcely to be cognizable during the present life, although the identity of the body is never called in question ; and, if this be the case, the point now to be determined must be, How much of that identical primitive matter ought to be expected in a future resuscitation of the body, in order to constitute identity in the person ? It may be answered : As neither reason nor science can determine the case of the one, neither ought it to make the attempt in the other : and, as far as we can see, no such determination need be thought about. If it is a doctrine of the Scripture, that this shall take place, and if it can be shewn that the declarations thus made may be relied on, reason can have no more to object, than it can to the reasonableness of the production of a tree from an acorn, or the growth of an ear of corn from the grain. Both must be produced by a power nothing short of Omnipotent, whether that operate in the ordinary or extraordinary ways of Providence. Reason would, in the one case, never think of proposing objections to what it is bound to recognise as fact : and, in the other, the difficulty is in no sense greater, nor the event proposed less likely. For if the atonement, as we have already shewn, was undertaken and made for the purpose of restoring all that was lost by the fall, it is by no means unlikely that the resurrection of the body was intended also to be brought about as an invariable consequence, though not always to enjoy the same degree of beatitude ; and in this sense the Scripture seems to argue when it speaks of this doctrine. If this then be the case, nothing can be more reasonable, nothing more likely, than that the work of our Redeemer was complete in all its parts ; and in one respect exceeding even the blessings of creation and of an earthly paradise, viz. in raising the body to eternal life, and in giving it an inheritance among the saints in light. Where, when, or how, this will take place, our Scriptures nowhere inform us ; and, as the solution of these questions manifestly exceeds

human powers to effect, it can never be the province of reason, as it certainly is not of science, to attempt it; neither can the one or the other pronounce the event impossible. Reason has here nothing from which such a conclusion can be drawn, and science is quite destitute of matter upon which observation can be made. If then no impossibility can here be made out, and this is the fact; and if it be not unreasonable to expect the event, which we affirm also to be the case; then, if our Scriptures mention it as certain, and we can shew that these are worthy of all acceptance, it will follow that reason is bound to admit this also as a point of faith. But it ought to be observed, our Scriptures not only teach this as a doctrine revealed from above, they also exemplify it in an apparently well-attested fact. If, therefore, it can be shewn that these books are such as to be worthy of belief, no reasonable objection can be made to this doctrine.

SECTION VI.

ON THE FALL, REDEMPTION, &c.

THESE are subjects against which much and loud declamation has often been urged. Reason, it has been said again and again, can see no end to be gained by routes so tedious and circuitous, and which might have been brought about by one single volition of the Deity. Conclusions have then been drawn more suitable, perhaps, to the tempers of such disputants, than reasonable, and the Scriptures consequently denounced as the work of imposture.

In considering all questions of this sort, however, I think it will be granted, that our arguments ought to be formed and directed with strict regard to things as they are, not to things as they might have been. Had the world, indeed, been differently constituted, then should we have had reason for entertaining notions widely different from those we now hold, because they would necessarily be formed on knowledge which we do not now possess, and would therefore be justifiable.

Our question must, therefore, be considered with reference to things as they now are, and in this respect we now pro-

ceed to consider it. It is granted I think on all hands, that God created man, and it will as necessarily be granted that he has created him such in form, condition, and powers, as suited the decisions of his infinite wisdom. It will, perhaps, also be granted, that the Deity would not create a being independent of himself; such an event would certainly be unreasonable to expect, and perhaps impossible to bring about. The plan chosen seems to be, that man should be endued with capacities suited to the confined sphere he had been destined to fill, capable of being extended and improved as society should multiply about him, and in proportion as all possible means afforded for that purpose should be employed, nevertheless still limited; with bodily powers, too, partaking very much of this character though limited in a still greater degree.

Now, if we can suppose such a being to have been made dependent on his Creator (and it would be unreasonable to suppose the contrary), some marks of that dependence must as necessarily have been left for his observance—something either to be given or abstained from, in testimony of his fealty. Man, however, had nothing to give; negative obedience was, therefore, all that could reasonably be asked for: and, it will now follow, that the less the privation called for was, light in the same proportion would the tax demanded be; and such we are taught was the fact. Now, if we can suppose any such law as this to have been laid down, we must also suppose some punishment annexed to its infraction; and, for the purpose of securing obedience with beings such as man confessedly was, this punishment must have been severe. Not that the Lawgiver might not, if he had chosen, made the penalty light, as he had the conditions; but because reason judges differently. In human laws we know, as the facility for transgression is increased, punishments have usually been made severe; not for the purpose of wantonly inflicting the punishment, but to prevent the occurrence of crime. In the case before us, then, as no want whatever is said to have existed, and such it is reasonable to suppose a new creation coming from a perfect Deity would be, to refuse to acquiesce in a very small privation (and the smaller this was, so much greater would the crime of transgression be), would be to engage in an act of open rebellion against

the Lawgiver, and to set his law at utter defiance. It will avail nothing here to plead for the liability to mistake or lapse, in which such man had been originally placed ; it will stand in no stead to say his volitions were circumscribed, his views dark, or his experience immature: these might, indeed, have been urged on mercy, and mercy we learn has attended to them; but justice could not thus be stayed. As far as the powers of volition went, they could choose between life and death: to indulge in a very trifling gratification, coupled as this was with the loss of life, and of all the blessings with which it was then attended, involved questions requiring nothing like philosophy for their solution. The case here was easy, plain, and obvious; the will had power enough to deliberate and to determine; the views, however contracted they may have been, could see to the very end of the matter; and as to experience, no want of it could be pleaded: the command was easy, plain, and obvious: the punishment heavy beyond description—nevertheless, the man, tempted indeed but unawed by a superior power, and urged by no necessity, deliberately transgressed and fell.

If it be replied, that a laudable thirst for knowledge prompted the deed; it may be answered: It does not appear that the facilities for acquiring real knowledge were by this event multiplied. A knowledge of evil, moral and physical, seems to be the only acquisition made, the absence of which right reason would never deplore. But it may be urged, why did an all-wise Being create man with a liability to fall? Is it reasonable that he should have done so? I will answer: If man was intended to be any thing more than a piece of mere unintelligent, unfeeling, and unconscious machinery, he must have been made subject to this liability. Improvement, in whatever way sought, which seems indeed to form the great stimulant to human endeavours, implies also the possibility of failure. Virtue, the brightest star recognised on earth, and which ever calls forth the energies of the best, implies also the existence of vice. Riches too take for granted that poverty somewhere exists; and wisdom that foolishness is something more than a name. Man, then, taken as a dependent being, and constituted as he was, could not but be liable to error; and, indeed, the very circumstance of supposing that he once fell, is sufficient proof that he was

originally formed with this liability. But why the Creator chose thus to constitute him, can only be answered by himself: A QUESTION which will remain unsolved, whether we reject the scriptural account of the fall or not: these facts will in either case remain as they were, and the only answer that can be given will be, that *the decisions of wisdom inscrutable to us determined that it should be thus.*

We may, however, proceed one step further, and affirm, that it will be difficult if not impossible to shew, that dependent, intelligent, and in any way free creatures, can be so situated with respect to a superior, as not to be liable to error; and liability of this sort is sufficient to vindicate the scriptural account of the fall from the charge of being *unreasonable*. For if we allow such creatures to be liable to error, it will, perhaps, be difficult to suppose the existence of one for any length of time, who has not erred in one way or other; and if we appeal to the consciences of individuals, situated as they now are, and endued with all the knowledge made accessible by the fall, and the experience of some thousands of years to boot, it will perhaps be impossible to find one, who will not afford the most ample testimony to his own transgressions in this respect. Our position, then, is not only conformable with the deductions of reason, from the nature of the case, but is confirmed by experience; and this, under circumstances the most favourable for conducting us to a contrary conclusion.

With respect to scriptural redemption, as that is nothing more than the privilege obtained through the atonement, which has already been considered, it cannot now be necessary to shew the reasonableness of such a doctrine; because the proof adduced for the one, is equally applicable to the other. We shall now proceed, therefore, to consider what has been termed *the New Birth, or Regeneration.*

SECTION VII.

ON THE NEW BIRTH, OR REGENERATION.

It should be premised that our Scriptures, like other books, frequently use metaphorical language: that is, they

apply terms originally designating something in nature, either to the mind or to some other agent or thing considered abstractedly ; but in other respects still analogous with that to which they were originally applied.

In the case before us, those who have not accepted the terms of reconciliation offered by the atonement (for it is most positively affirmed that all have sinned), are said to be alienated from God : by which is meant, they are not in a situation entitling them to be considered as his liege subjects ; but in a state of rebellion, and actually engaged in the service and interests of another : on the other hand, when they have accepted these terms, they are declared to be the *children of God*, and to have been made such by adoption and grace ; and then, by analogy, as the first state was preceded by the natural birth, so was the second by the *spiritual birth, new birth, or regeneration*. If it be asked, In what way this state is to be attained to ? The answer given generally must be : By submitting to the means proposed, which involve the law both of faith and of works to be received, acquiesced in, and obeyed to the uttermost. But, the first ordinance or act in this process, whereby this acquiescence and determination to obey, as well as the belief that God will graciously accept us is signified, is the rite of baptism. This rite, then, has not improperly been denominated the laver of regeneration ; and upon its being duly submitted to, the penitent is said to be *born again, regenerated*, and made *a child of God* ;—that is, he is made one of God's church, people, and family : and is placed in a situation which will enable him to present his services of prayer, praise, obedience, and love, in a way in which they will be accepted ; so that henceforth he shall be provided with all those helps, temporal and spiritual, of which he stands so much in need. It will be idle to inquire, what exact proportions of grace may be realised upon the act of entering upon this state, as it will be what each and every other ordinance afterwards complied with will bestow. This would be to attempt to ascertain with mathematical precision, that which will admit of the application of no such measure ; and finally to delude, rather than to edify, the person so disposed to trifle with his Maker. Nor will it be less erroneous, if not impious, to suppose this or any other ordinance enjoined by the Almighty, to be inadequate to insure the end

had in view. This would be to annihilate the exercise of faith, and to make the promises of none effect. The truth seems to be, this ordinance is enjoined, as indeed every other is, as a part of the work of faith, calculated indeed to bring down the blessings of God upon the believer, but at such times and in such measure, as shall suit the purposes of His consummate wisdom and goodness.

Let us now see whether this doctrine is or is not conformable with the decisions of right reason; and in doing this we will take ground familiar to all. Now, for the purpose of securing the food necessary for the body, great care we know, industry, and even the aids of art, are absolutely necessary. Wheat will never be produced, unless the earth be carefully cultivated and constantly attended to. Trees will not yield their fruits in any but a scanty and unprofitable measure, unless they be pruned, manured, and every other means suited to bring about the desired end be employed: but upon the application of these, the valleys stand so thick with corn that they are said to laugh and sing; and the fruit-trees bow down with a weight of blessings, which spreads delight and plenty around. This, all will allow, is the orderly appointment of the Deity, and that it is right. And, if any provision has been made for the sustenance of the soul, it is reasonable enough to suppose that human effort would be called for in one way or other, and that some analogy would be discoverable between this and that made for the body: in other words, that something like a general harmony would be visible in the several operations of the same Deity. In this case, then, the believer in Scripture is commanded to break up his fallow ground, and to sow in righteousness—to bear precious seed with him; and then it is promised, that doubtless he shall come again rejoicing and bring his sheaves with him; that though he sow in tears, still he shall assuredly reap in joy: by all of which is obviously meant, that he who carefully cultivates the means of grace thus placed in his hands, shall, just as the husbandman does, and by the operations of the same gracious Being, receive an abundant and timely blessing—that like a tree planted by the side of the refreshing streamlet, his fruit shall be timely and plenteous, and all that he does shall prosper.

This, then, which is the doctrine of our Scripture, is not

only in strict unison with that to which recourse is had in the analogous operations of nature, but, as far as we can judge, is the only one likely to be beneficial to creatures such as we are. For, if blessings from above are at all to be expected (and such *must* those be which can reach the soul), it is most reasonable to suppose, that some means would be appointed whereby these can be insured. To bestow them unconditionally, would be to put an end to every motive to obedience, and eventually to obedience itself; not to bestow them under any circumstances—to reduce mankind to a state of utter despondency and desperation, in which life would be a burden, and death only a curse. And again, to bestow them at once, and in such a measure as forcibly to insure a sinless obedience throughout life, would be to reduce the recipient to the situation of a mere machine; to render the terms both of the law and gospel useless; and so far to make man independent of his Maker, and unfit for human society. This, then, is what it would be unreasonable to expect, and it is what our Scripture never promises; besides, facts which none can misunderstand, and which afford a testimony not to be disputed assure us, that the greatest saint ever known on earth, never arrived at a state such as this; and of those who have believed themselves to be thus gifted, every day's life may be adduced to shew that the belief was a delusion. One party will perhaps reply,—This is making too much of human effort; it will lead to self-righteousness on the one hand, or to despondency on the other: another, that it is appealing to a miraculous interposition of the Deity, without any adequate end being proposed, and virtually resolving all religious experience into a system of mysticism and supernatural energy, which experience will never justify.

We answer in the first place: We do not by this view of our question make too much of human effort; we only call for its reasonable exertion, just as in every human profession or avocation we know it is applied. The husbandman, we know, will look in vain for his crops if his fields have not been cultivated, and otherwise attended to. The gardener will in vain expect his flowers or his fruits, if the use of the spade and the pruning knife has not been resorted to. The merchant will find neither goods nor money in his treasury, unless attention have been paid to his orders, his servants,

his vessels, the winds and the tides, and a thousand other considerations. These are truths too well known to admit of a moment's doubt, and yet it is equally well known, that these efforts alone can in no case insure success. The ordinary operations of Providence must also concur—in other words, one may sow, another water, but God must give the increase. On the side of Providence, however, we find no failure; fruitful seasons are invariably given; and, upon the whole, persons deliberately invest their capital on the faith of Providence and industry working together; and hence all national and individual wealth is known to arise. But suspend the necessity for exertion, and universal idleness, apathy, and wickedness, must inevitably succeed: or cut off the hope of the co-operating influences of a gracious Providence, and the same consequences will as necessarily follow.

In the religion proposed in our Scripture, man is in the same manner called upon for exertion, and for such as it is evidently in his power to make; upon this, assistance is promised, and success is spoken of as already attained to. The same Being which has in the one case made it absolutely necessary to the welfare of the individual to be up and stirring, has also in the other and for the same reasons, laid his commands on all, “to work out their salvation with fear and trembling;” because, it is said, he will work with them both to will and to do, and that they shall *never fail*. I may now ask, does this, in any measure, ascribe *merit* to the effort? The only thing it recommends is obviously *prudence*, and that but to a degree recognised and acted upon in every other pursuit: the only discernible difference is, in the former case there may be occasional failures; in the latter there can be none.

But it may be said, it will induce despondency. Men may fail at one time or other to exert these efforts, and then Divine assistance may be withdrawn. To depend, therefore, on the exertion of human efforts, will be so nearly allied to a dependence on human merits, that both may be considered as virtually identical. I answer, *to rely* on the efficiency of human efforts is one thing; *to wait* for the Divine promise on their being obediently exerted, another: the one would be an act of presumption, the other a work of faith. After we have done all, we are indeed “unprofitable servants;”

but, if assistance is graciously promised on no other grounds, and graciously it must be given in any case, then is the commandment truly ordained unto life: and, although our imperfect services can merit nothing but condemnation, they may, through the mercy of the promises, hope for all things. Besides, in human affairs where there is confessedly occasional risk and loss, we find nothing like despondency. The man would here be termed a fool, were he to lay up his talent in a napkin: a busy and active world judges far better, and the earth is accordingly ransacked from the east to the west. Dangers are, in this case, treated as morning dreams, and even life itself put in jeopardy for the acquisition of wealth. But, according to our Scripture, in labouring after the one thing needful there can be no risk, no probability of loss whatsoever. The kingdom of grace is subject to no storms; the artifices of enemies can avail nothing here; nor will the vessel ever founder, because He who can control all these has promised never to forsake us. Besides, if any man occasionally mistake the way, and so fall upon the shoals or the quicksands, there is an Advocate with the Father, who will make intercession for the sinner; and, by one means or other, point out the safer path. His pilots too will be found near every place of danger, and his winds attuned to the wants of his servants. This is the tenor of his promise; and we are assured, that contrary to this no example can be cited. But if we give up our energies, poor as they confessedly are, what must be the consequence? As far as we can learn from our Scriptures, not only shall we be left to the mercy of the waves, but the winds will be adverse! Every experienced mariner will predict the certainty of our destruction; and we must perish without remedy and without hope. Give up your energies however weak they may be, and you give up your only means of obedience,—of either glorifying God or of benefiting man: without these, faith, however strong, is but a name; and, however it may depend upon its own simple exertions for the removal of mountains, it may finally stand for nothing.

The objection however will recur. Still it will be said, man, may eventually fail in his obedience; and then, on this view, he must also fail in his hope; and, consequently, no assurance of salvation can ever be entertained. I answer:

If he do this deliberately, then is there an end to his entertaining the title of christian, believer, servant of God, and every other such name ; and his condemnation will be just. If, in the next place, such disobedience be involuntary, or brought about accidentally, or by some sudden and overpowering temptation, still we may trust that mercy will be extended to the culprit. Chastisement from above, admonition from a friend, or the pangs of a wounded conscience, may bring the sinner to repentance and to prayer ; and, in this case, faith and hope will never be exerted in vain. And, indeed, so long as a man can judge between right and wrong—can make the choice between good and bad, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, he must continue to be a responsible creature ; and, as such, reason requires that he be accordingly rewarded or punished. But, should his faculties fail him, of the sin then committed he cannot be justly charged as guilty ; nor of this, as far as we can see, need he be afraid. So long as he retains his reasoning faculties, he must be responsible ; and so long will he be enabled to appreciate and to employ the means of grace : but why he should make provision for a different state, it is hard to say, especially as He, whom he serves, has declared, that his “grace is sufficient :” or why such supposititious case should be resorted to, none, perhaps, but a being highly fantastical and ridiculously theoretic, can see any good reason. If it be intended, however, as it seems to be by this mode of arguing, to determine the exact point where the ordinary and extraordinary operations of Providence meet, the answer is : Revelation has not determined this point ; and human reason is unequal to the task. Faith and hope stand in need of no such determination ; and obedience prefers taking the naked command of its liege Sovereign, unencumbered and unexplained.

With regard to the last objection, that an unnecessary appeal is made to supernatural influences, I would answer : Although the power appealed to is evidently supernatural, it is no more unreasonable to expect it, than it is to look for success in life from a due exertion of our common energies. In the cultivation of the earth, as we have seen, success is almost universally attained to, and that by the exertion of a power evidently Divine. And, if religion be really a gift of the Deity, which our Scripture declares is the

case, it is but reasonable to believe, that the man who is sincere and active in its cultivation, will in some way or other receive similar encouragements — blessings such as to secure an inward happiness, and to confirm him in the belief that “his labour is not in vain.” In this case, then, we expect powers no more miraculous, than those daily witnessed in the natural world; we are justified in expecting those only of a different kind, and such as are available to the end for which they are sought. In the one case, *nature*, which is an appointment of the Deity, warrants us in expecting an increase from a proper cultivation; in the other, *the Scripture*, which we are taught is also an appointment of the Deity, positively declares that suitable assistance shall be afforded: not, let it be remembered, for the purpose of bringing about events which properly deserve the name of miracles; but to raise the believer to such a degree of faith and of hope, as can bring him within the reach of mercy from above, and of that peace which passeth all understanding here. The influences expected in this instance then, are such only as the nature of the case requires; and, as we find similar energies employed in the natural world for the purpose of bringing about certain necessary results, it is quite reasonable to look for these in the case of religion. Whether they be considered natural or supernatural, ordinary or extraordinary (points which we can never determine), it will signify nothing to our present purpose, which is to shew the reasonableness of such result, without attempting to account for it philosophically; and this, we affirm, is not only what we might expect would be the fact, but what it is absolutely necessary should, were man intended to fill his sphere of action here, in a manner worthy of his nature and capacities, and gradually to be prepared for a higher state of being in another.

SECTION VIII.

ON THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURAL ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

ANY question involving a certain portion of abstract or metaphysical reasoning, will, upon its being generally adopted and discussed, soon become entangled with difficulties, such

as will require no ordinary degree of patience and penetration to separate the true from the false; which however would, after all, be thrown away on the multitude, who can never be expected to be good metaphysicians. But, upon granting even this almost impossibility to take place, it may still be affirmed, that religious truths recommended on grounds no better, must be quite inadequate to secure the ends for which they had been given; because the human mind, however gifted in many respects, is still far from infallible, especially in cases where neither real knowledge of all the circumstances, nor experience sufficient to correct the errors of observation, is attainable. If, then, the doctrines above mentioned had been proposed on grounds of this sort, it may be asked, To what discordant and irreconcilable conclusions must not men have come? — conclusions repugnant perhaps to the well-being of society, and consequently unsuitable to the ends for which religion had itself been given. On the character and operations of the human mind, a subject with which we are indeed conversant, and one proper enough for human investigation, What shadowy, groundless, and deceptive theories, it may be asked, have not been proposed? What then are we to expect either sound or satisfactory in the results arrived at, when we presume to make those of the Deity (matters totally removed from the reach of human observation) the subject of our researches?*

* In a work lately published, entitled “Mahometanism Unveiled,” evincing very great ingenuity, research, and piety, we have a remarkable instance of an appeal to one of the properties of the Divine mind, namely *a particular Providence*, in order to account for the origin, progress, and continuance of Mahomedanism; and, as this is followed by an endeavour to give a new interpretation to certain passages of Scripture, I may be excused if I notice the principle just adverted to here, and that of interpretation brought in to its aid, in a subsequent place. Mr. Forster is of opinion that no satisfactory reason has yet been assigned for the phenomenon just mentioned: he proposes, therefore, to settle this question by appealing at once to a special and superintending Providence. “The coming,” says he, “of Mahomet at such a point of time, is a problem that can yield to no process of solution, which can shut out the idea of a special and superintending Providence.” (Introd. p. 63.) This may at first sight appear startling, because it may be made to inculcate the doctrine, that God is the author of evil. Mr. Forster, however, does not intend this; for at pages 74, 163, of the first volume of this work, he speaks of Providence in its *permissive* character only. He ought not, therefore, to be charged

any thing less discordant than discord itself here be hoped for? — Any thing less convincing than the wildest dreams of the wildest enthusiast; or the more amusing, though equally groundless fictions, of the novelist or the poet?

It may be true, however, that these doctrines are proposed in our Scriptures on no such grounds, but that they stand on foundations totally different, much more easy to be understood, and more suitable to the purposes of human life: and, if this be the fact, to discuss them on these principles, or to object to them on their account, may in every case lead to mistake and error, and render them just as

with any wilful intention of making God the author of evil. I cannot help thinking nevertheless, that he has unwarily involved himself in a most perplexing question. In the places just pointed out, he speaks, for instance, of Providence as *permissive* only; but in his argument from prophecy he makes it *predictive*; he represents it there as deliberately unfolding a plan, in which *all the good* and *all the evil* which have hitherto attended the true church are comprehended and palpably linked together; all the evils to be found either in Judaism, Christianity, or Mohammedanism, unconditionally provided for, fixed, and determined. Now, an ordinary reader may ask, To which of these views of Providence he ought to adhere,—to the *permissive*, or to the *pre-ordaining*? because he may with truth affirm, that they are not only *essentially different*, but such as to involve in their application consequences the most irreconcilable possible. If Mr. Forster reply, the *permissive*, then will the grand principle upon which his work rests instantly disappear; but, if he answer, the *pre-ordaining*, then we have *fatalism* with all its horrors; unless indeed he limit his principle to these events only; and in this case, God is at once made the author of all the evils which they involve. Mr. Forster appears to me to have had recourse to both these views on different occasions. In endeavouring to establish his theory, he recurs universally to the pre-ordaining; but in defending it, to the permissive, as in his Vindication (pp. 30, 31). In the same work, p. 39, he makes a providential co-operation produce the Mahometan apostasy, just as the evil spirits of old were said to put lies in the mouths of certain prophets, 1 Kings, xxii. 19—23. But here I think Mr. Forster has mistaken his context. It should be borne in mind, in the first place, that the language is here *symbolical*, as far as to the end of the 22d verse, (see Diss. ii. § 1). It is not, therefore, at all *necessary* to suppose, that God actually commissioned any such spirits, but only had allowed these prophets to be deceived, or, as it is stated in plain terms in the 23d, that the Lord had made or *pronounced* these prophets liars; because, as it is added, the Lord had spoken evil, or determined that calamity should fall on this impious king. No precise doctrines, I will maintain, relating either to the hierarchy of heaven, or to the instruments of Satan, can be extracted from passages like this: they are merely a sort of highly figurative parable, which no one can argue ought to be pressed into such a service. In the next page (Vind. p. 40), St. Paul is also cited as affording a similar instance.

inapplicable to the purposes of promoting real piety, as the conclusions thus arrived at may be distant from the truth. For my own part, I believe this to be the case: my reasons will presently appear. To begin with the first. —

In that part of our Scripture which is termed the Old Testament, we never hear of election (which implies a preference given to some person or persons before others), until the family of Abraham had received a special call to dedicate themselves to the worship of the true God. Before this time, there seems to have been no other preference shewn than that which rose out of faith, exemplified in the practice

“*God,*” it is said, “*shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.*” 2 Thess. ii. 11. Here I think Mr. Forster has been less felicitous than before. This verse begins with, “*And for this cause,*” plainly shewing that some previous reason existed for this proceeding; and this reason we have in the preceding verse: it is, “*Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*” For this *commission*, therefore, or rather *permission* (for this the term used occasionally signifies: compare Mark, v. 12, 13, with Luke, viii. 32, *i. e.* *πεμπω* with *επιτρεπω*), we have a good reason assigned; and may therefore conclude, that nothing absolute or unconditional could have been intended by St. Paul. We have not, then, in any one of these instances, an example of God’s *absolute preordination of moral evil*; but, on the contrary, an exertion for the purpose of resisting evil. Another, and, as it appears to me fatal, objection to the doctrine of Divine Providence taken as a principle of scriptural interpretation is, that it is of too indefinite a character, or, rather, is too far removed from *our* powers to comprehend, to warrant any expectation of just and satisfactory conclusions generally. Take, for example, the commandment, “*Thou shalt do no murder.*” This, in its verbal character, is easy, clear, and binding. If however we introduce the doctrine of a special Divine Providence, and proceed to interpret by facts, as Mr. Forster would in other cases have us, then it may be answered: But murders are frequently committed; and, as Providence must not here be shut out, it will follow, that no one has resisted his will; and also that the provisions of the Almighty are actually opposed to his positive commands! To the pious Christian looking up to Providence for a happy result in all cases, there can be no objection; it is part of the work of faith, and therefore his duty: but, that he should take this as a metaphysical principle, and thence attempt to account for all the phenomena in the world, seems one of the strangest perversions of the office of human reason that has ever come to my knowledge. As a general principle of scriptural interpretation, therefore, the doctrine of a special Providence can by no means be admitted; to employ it in this particular case only will involve a *petitio principii*, or, what is the same thing, will be to argue in a circle; while a particular Providence may safely be appealed to on the question, that all things shall finally work together for the good of the believer.

of real piety. Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Melchizedek, were certainly characters of this sort; they were considered as holy men, and as such became objects of the love and favour of their Creator. Nothing is said in these times about *peculiar, chosen, or elect people*; they are either just or unjust, the sons of God or of men, in proportion as they served God or not. The reason seems to have been this: There was at that day no exclusion from the means of grace, the Church was open to all; and consequently no peculiarity as a people could exist in any: individual peculiarity there may and must have been; but this never receives the name of *election, peculiar people, or any such thing*. But, after the calling of Abraham, and indeed to the very end of the Jewish canon, we read of an *elect, peculiar, and holy people*; but in no instance whatever is this applied to times higher than those of Abraham; and, what is equally remarkable, we are told by the Prophets, that times should come in which this distinction should for ever cease. Again, in every place of the New Testament in which this subject is touched upon, no allusion to the privilege is carried higher than the times of Abraham, nor extended *in a national point of view*, lower than those in which the Jewish polity ended; but, it is positively declared, that faith had now attained to what the election (or chosen people) had not: and that the Gentiles, whom this election had once excluded, had not only been brought near by the blood of Christ, but had been even grafted on the stock of the faithful, to the exclusion of the election generally, whose privileges had been forfeited through a want of faith. In the Old Testament, then, and in the allusions made to it in the New, election is appealed to in a national point of view only, for the purpose of strongly marking the exclusion of other nations from its privileges. Individual election among the Jews moreover is never so much as once hinted at; but, on the contrary, it is declared that they were all holy, or elect, considered as a nation, whatever they may have been as individuals.

Let us now attend to the manner in which the close of this exclusive polity, and the wider system of universal salvation, are inculcated in both Testaments. The prophets constantly remind us that the church shall be extended, that

it shall lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes, in order that the forces of the Gentiles might come in ; which we are further told they should do like a flowing stream : and again, that living waters should proceed forth of Jerusalem, which should be for the healing of the nations ;—that all should know Jehovah, from the least to the greatest ; and that the knowledge of his power should at one day cover the earth, just as the waters covered the sea. In all such predictions, the end of the exclusive polity of the Jews is necessarily inculcated, and a wider, and indeed universal, system taught, in which the distinction of Jew and Gentile should cease,—a system in which bond and free (the proselyted slave and his master), male and female, should stand alike in the church ; and in which the means of grace should be as wide and sufficient as the wants of intelligent creation could call for. This question is also argued in the New Testament, in the most explicit manner ; and we are directly and plainly told, that, in this point of view, there is now “no difference.” If, then, any thing like the terms, *election*, *peculiar people*, *chosen*, should be found to occur in the New Testament and applied to Christians, all perhaps will allow, that they cannot be so interpreted as to signify *election* in the exclusive point of view just spoken of ; because, such an interpretation must tend to oppose both the declarations of Prophets and the conclusions of the Apostles. And, further, as this doctrine did not apply to individuals in the first case, neither is it likely that it did in the second. It will be for us to inquire, however, whether, upon its occurrence in the New Testament, it ought or ought not, so to be taken.

Now, if we are taught under the Jewish system, that the Church was one day to be greatly enlarged both in extent and knowledge, not to be destroyed and rebuilt ; it will be our first duty to inquire, on what principle this enlargement was to take place : whether, for example, the Scriptures, laws, observances, &c. applied under the Theocracy, should be applied or not, under the more general system of Christianity ; or, whether the whole was to be new, and nothing whatever to be retained from the preceding system. We are told, indeed, in some places, that *all things should become new*, and that things which were old were ready to pass away ; which might be sufficient to determine our question,

were there not strong reasons for supposing, that these terms were not intended to be taken in their most extensive and absolute sense. But we are also taught to believe, that we are grafted in upon the stock of the preceding system; and that the Jews, who are now excluded through unbelief, shall again be grafted in, and then again possess their ancient religious privileges. In other places we are taught, that although there is a change in the law, there is nevertheless no abolition of that originally given; but, on the contrary, its establishment has in one case been provided for, and its fulfilment in another. It may be asked then: In what way are these declarations to be reconciled; both emanate from the same authority; and to both an equal regard ought to be paid? My answer is: I believe this can be done in one way only; and that is, by adhering to the *spirit* rather than the *letter* of the ancient law; because, under the present change of circumstances, it is in this way alone that the requirements of both can be complied with. If, for example, that part which was ceremonial had a typical respect to the atonement of Christ, then in the antitype, namely in the person of Christ, we can look upon that as having been fulfilled, as to its intention and *spirit*, and its observance, as to the *letter*, now superseded. In like manner, as the moral law enjoined not only observances peculiar to the times in which it was given, but also a system of eternal truths never elsewhere revealed, and no where specifically abrogated; our obvious duty is, to view it not as abolished, but in every case, as its declarations may require, intended for the regulation of a more perfect and extended system. And this can be done only by an adherence to its *spirit*. In applying Scriptures therefore, given under the Old, and referring to the times of the New, Testament, their bearing and extent must be regulated on these principles; and on these they have been cited and applied both by our Lord and his Apostles. Reason, therefore, recommended by authority such as this, must be quite decisive on this question.

Bearing this in mind, we may now proceed to inquire for what purpose the terms *election*, *chosen*, &c. are introduced in the Old Testament; and then determine how they ought to be understood, when found occurring in the New.

Under the Old Testament, then, and after the times of

Abraham, election was made, as we are taught, not absolutely or unconditionally to the attainment of eternal life,—no such terms ever occur; but for the purpose of being God's people;—a people confessing his name, obeying his commandments, and waiting for the fulfilment of his promises. From the manner in which the Jews were addressed on this subject, it is clear that persuasion, not force, was resorted to. The strongest possible reasons indeed were adduced, for the purpose of urging the exercise of faith and obedience; but still they were reasons, and nothing more: and, from the numerous instances of failure on record, we are certain that no Almighty influence could generally have been exerted; although we know, that the promises urged again and again declared, that God would, on his part, never withdraw his mercies or love from his people. If then these mercies were not universally afforded,—and they were not,—disobedience must have been the real and efficient cause; and this we are unreservedly told was the fact. The reason therefore of these failures must have been, a non-compliance on the part of the elect with the conditions proposed; and this, also, we are repeatedly told was the case: They would have none of his laws; and, as to his commandments, they cast them behind their backs. *Election*, therefore, could not have been proposed in an abstract or metaphysical, but in a *practical*, sense, unless we give a flat denial to the positive declarations of Scripture: that is,—this people could not have been chosen *absolutely* and *unconditionally* either to eternal life, or, what is much the same thing, to a state in which it was impossible to fall; but to the privilege of means, which, if duly applied, would, through the exertion of the Divine power and mercy, have finally insured the ends proposed.

Let us now come down to Christian times, and inquire how the case stands in these. Here we find, then, the covenant generally appealed to, to be that which had been made with Abraham, containing indeed the promise of a Saviour, which the system of Moses neither could nor did disannul; the end had in view one and identically the same,—namely, the salvation of the creature; the means to be used, still the same,—faith in the Son of God; and, as far as it regarded personal character, individuals were to be *holy, harmless, undefiled*,—*a kingdom of priests, a chosen nation, a*

peculiar people. And our question now is, how are such terms as these to be understood and applied? Whether Christians are thus made a peculiar people, by some national and exclusive appointment, such as not to admit of the approach of others to the same grace and mercy; or, whether they are, by God's grace, which has been offered according to the terms of his first covenant and received under the same terms, made peculiar in his estimation, and different from a world dead in trespasses and sins; refusing either to receive such privileges, or receiving, refusing to tender an unfeigned and hearty obedience to their requirements? On this last view, the *spirit* of the ancient system, though not the *letter*, is strictly preserved. The general exclusion which God had once notified, now no longer exists; that partial one which does, is purely the work of man,—the effect of rebellion willingly undertaken and deliberately persevered in; and, therefore, this exclusion is just. To the repenting rebel mercy is indeed held out; but on no other terms than those of obedience. This was once the privilege of the penitent Jew exclusively; but even then, repentance, obedience, and faith, were demanded: this privilege is now held out to all, and that on precisely the same terms. The spirit of both dispensations is therefore strictly the same, although the letter in some respects differs.

In the next place, How is this question treated by the writers of the New Testament? In the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we find it formally proposed and discussed, and in the very order in which we have been viewing it. In the first place, the application of the ancient Scriptures according to their *spirit*, and not their letter, is thus made: “*They (are) not all Israel,*” says the Apostle in the sixth verse, “*who are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, (are they) all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*” Then follows the explanation (v. 8): “*That is,*” it is said, “*they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*” We find here, then, that even under the first dispensation, the privilege was afforded purely with regard to the terms of the promise; and, in this respect, we are informed a little lower down, that Isaac was appointed to be the exclusive channel (vers. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13): not that

Esau was absolutely excluded, or left destitute of the means of salvation; but only, that the blessings to be conveyed, by virtue of the promise, to all nations, were to come through the line of Isaac, and not that of Esau. Now, if a promise of this kind was at all to be made, no one will perhaps think of arguing, that the time, manner, character, extent, &c. of this promise, was not purely the privilege of him to determine who graciously deigned to make it. This, I think, it is manifest, is the intention of the Apostle to shew, from the 11th to the 14th verse of this chapter; namely,—that, in the exertion of this mercy, merit or demerit in the individual so appointed, had nothing whatever to do (see, also, v. 16, where we have a similar conclusion drawn). In the 17th and 18th verses, God's faithfulness in following up the terms of this covenant is dwelt upon and vindicated, in the event of the deliverance from Egypt; which, the Scripture also informs us, was undertaken solely with reference to the promise made to the fathers: and, as this promise was given purely by the inscrutable will of the Almighty, to the same source must the furtherance of it be ascribed. *Therefore*, it is said, *hath he mercy on whom he is willing to have mercy, and whom he wills he hardeneth.* ("Αγα ὁῦν, ὃν θέλει, ἐλεεῖ* ὃν δὲ θέλει, σκληρύνει, which I would rather render: *Therefore, then, (with) whom he wills he deals mercifully; and (with) whom he wills, hardly.*) The exercise of the Divine will is here, evidently, the principal point which the Apostle has before him; and the next is to shew, how this necessarily exerts itself in following up its own purposes.

To the translation of the word *σκληρύνει* by *he hardeneth*,* as given in our version, I must object; because the nature of the context here will not bear it: the exhibition of favour on the one hand, and of punishment on the other, being clearly the points in question; just as honour and dishonour,—that is, preference and rejection, in a certain sense,—were in the previous cases of Isaac and Esau. The argument of the Apostle then is, in this case, clear, orderly, and unembarrassed; and the sovereign will of the Almighty in making

* So in the Septuagint, Exodus, xiii. 15. 'Ηνίκα δὲ ἐσκληρύνει Φαραὼ ἱξαποστῆλαι ἡμᾶς, ἀπέκτεινε πᾶν πρωτότοκον, κ.τ.λ. Because Pharaoh dealt hardly (as to) sending us out, he (God) slew every first-born, &c.

known his purposes of grace, and in carrying them into effect in the face of all opposition, is satisfactorily vindicated.

The next verse (19) has perhaps created the greatest difficulty which has beset this question, viz. "*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?*" The persons with whom the dispute is here carried on are evidently Jews, who knew, but who had misapplied, the law. How then would such naturally answer the doctrine here delivered by St. Paul? I should imagine in something like this way: We Jews have never disputed the assertion of Jacob's preference to Esau; we have never denied that mercy was shewn to us, in conformity with the terms of the promise, and that Pharaoh and his host were destroyed: this has never entered into our minds. His appointment therefore has never been resisted by us. Why, then, are we now charged with sin on these heads? And why is it affirmed that we have lost these privileges as a nation? In reply to this, the Apostle again asserts the Divine prerogative, and then appeals to the ancient Scriptures in support of his conclusions (v. 25): "*I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*" Here, then, we have not only God's prerogative, but his *will*, to extend the means of grace to the Gentiles; and, a little lower down (v. 31), a conclusion is drawn from other prophecies, that Israel (*i. e.* according to the letter), which followed after the law of righteousness, had not attained to the law of righteousness, "*because,*" it is added, "*they sought it not by faith:*" and this manifestly involves the rejection of them as a nation. God, then, had the right to offer his mercy in what way he pleased, and also to whom he pleased. "But why," the question may recur, "doth he yet find fault?" Wherefore is this sudden change of circumstances brought about with respect to the Jews? The answer is,—"*Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.*" That is, pardon of sin, justification in the sight of God, can be obtained only through an exertion of mercy in the Deity. To this object was the promise directed; this was its final end and scope. But mark the inconsistency of

the Jew : Instead of seeking this in the only way by which it could be found, he has been seeking it by means of the law only ; when he ought to have known, that by this comes the conviction, not the pardon, of sin. If then mercy, in the rightful bestowal of its own privileges, made choice of the seed of Abraham ; it has not, without reason, removed the blessing from his posterity. The Jew has deliberately ceased to be a party in the covenant of promise ; while the Gentiles, who were not forgotten at the time of the original compact, have now, according to that appointment, become the favoured party ; and because they submit to the principal condition, which is, faith in the Saviour. The purpose of God however still is, and in this respect it is unchangeable, that when the Jew shall again become the *spiritual* son of Abraham, which must be done through the same faith, he shall again possess all his ancient privileges, as far as their spirit, and the real benefits intended to be conferred by them, are concerned.

There will no doubt, perhaps, now remain as to the scope of the Apostle's argument with regard to the Jews. Let us inquire in the next place, in what situation the Christian Church now stands, as taught in this and other places by the same Apostle. From the manner, then, in which this question is discussed, it seems highly probable that the Christian now stands on precisely the same ground which the Jew once did, taking into consideration the unavoidable difference of circumstances just alluded to. In verses 21—24 of the same chapter, it is said : “ *Hath not the potter power over the clay, &c. . . . That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?* ” Here, it should be observed, the *calling* of each is mentioned in the same context, and referred to an exertion of the same power and mercy ; and, that no possible mistake may arise as to the calling of the Gentiles, we have, in the next two verses, the prediction of this event cited from the prophecy of Hosea. The Apostle might, indeed, here have gone back to the original promise made to Abraham, in which it was said, that *all the nations of the earth should be blessed* ; but the prophecy adduced is more specific ; it marks the very objects of this call as being those persons

who had been excluded during the times of the Jewish polity, but now brought in, according to the predictions made under that system of things.

A difficulty, however, may be started, as to the force of the expressions, “afore prepared unto glory” (ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν). It may be urged, as, indeed, it sometimes is, that this passage ascribes an *absolute* and *irreversible* predestination to glory to those individuals, who are said to be *called* among Christians. I answer, if this be the case, it is difficult to imagine why the Apostle cited the prophecy of Hosea* in

* The following considerations are offered to shew, how inseparably the doctrine of predestination is attended with an appeal to prophecy in the New Testament. Eph. 1. 3. “*Who hath blessed us—According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,¹ that we should be holy, &c.—Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ—according to the good pleasure of HIS WILL—wherein he hath made us accepted—(9) Having MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself: That IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES, he might gather together all things in Christ—In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL,*” &c. Whatever may be thought of the terms here used, certain it is, that the privilege had in view is argued on the grounds of God’s absolute but *revealed* will, which had now in the fulness of the times received its fulfilment in Christ, in calling the Ephesian Gentiles, &c. to the knowledge of that salvation, which had been verbally promised before the polity of Israel had an existence, and indeed before Abraham himself had been born.

The parallel passage is (1 Peter, i. 10 &c.): “*Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who PROPHESIED OF THE GRACE (that should come) unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it TESTIFIED BEFOREHAND the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported, &c.—Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, &c.—But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, &c.—Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things—But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish (and such the Paschal lamb was, see Exod. xii. 5.)—Who verily was fore-ordained (προεγνωσμένου, as such fore-known, spoken of), before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times. . . THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.*” That St. Peter here argues on the authority of the revealed will of God, it is impossible for a moment to doubt: with the prophecies he commences, and with the authority of these,

¹ This expression will be considered hereafter.

support of his assertion. The prophet evidently speaks of the calling of a *people*, not of *particular individuals*: he speaks of a church in the aggregate, not of any or each member composing it *in particular*; just as the election of the Jews is spoken of taken as a whole, and not as individuals considered singly; and apparently for this reason, the Apostle here speaks in the plural number. If, however, an exception be taken, and recourse had to the particular cases of Jacob,

which he affirms shall stand fast for ever, he concludes: and it is worth remarking, that while he carries on this line of argument, he exhorts believers to sobriety, holiness, and the exercise of hope to the end: taking for granted, as it should seem, that this preordination of things by God, as made known by his servants, had not within itself any irresistible force or power by which their perseverance would be infallibly secured: no, it was made through *grace*, in order that it might be embraced by faith, and reduced to practice by the efforts of believers, assisted, as it should be, by the co-operating influences of the Holy Spirit. (See 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

Let the following passages also be examined, and the appeals to prophecy carefully noted: viz. Acts, ii. 16—23—28; x. 42, 43; xvii. 26—31. Rom. i. 2—4, τοῦ ὀφειδέντος. Heb. iv. 7. ὀφίξει. Acts, iv. 25—28, προσώγειτε. Rom. viii. 28. *Who are the called* ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE (comp. chap. ix. 11, &c.) 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called* (comp. chap. i. 2—6; ix. 24—26, &c.), *them he also justified* (comp. 1 Cor. vi. 11), *them he also glorified* (comp. iv. 17, 18; Eph. ii. 5, 6, &c.). See also v. 36, where a new subject is introduced, and this also argued on written authority—Eph. ii. 20—22; iii. 1—6. “*That the Gentiles should be partakers of HIS PROMISE in Christ.*” 9. “*And to make all (men) see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God;*” 11. “*according to the eternal purpose (πρόθεσις τῶν αἰώνων, the purpose of ages) which he purposed in Christ our Lord.*” To these, other similar passages may be added, in all of which, however, the authority claimed is not any deduction made from the abstract properties of the Divine mind, but the express word of promise; not the fitness of things, but the authoritative word of God. And if this be the fact, which I believe it is, the predestination of the Holy Scriptures is not the predestination of metaphysics, or which is the same thing, the fatalism of the Stoics; but is, on the contrary, that predetermination of events which is to be found in the prophetic Scriptures alone; purposed, it may be for all we know, from eternity; *of this, however, we are utterly ignorant*; but made known for our edification, comfort, and eternal salvation. We have an exceedingly valuable remark on this subject in Justin Martyr’s Apology, which, as it shews the mind of the early Christians on this subject, I must be allowed to transcribe. After giving some extracts from the prophecies (I transcribe the Latin, that he may the more generally be understood), he says, “*Cæterum ne aliqui ex his, quæ protulimus, colligant, ex fati necessitate nos dicere fieri quæ fiant, atque eo quòd predicta sunt, prædeter-*

Esau, and Pharaoh, already alluded to, my answer will be : These persons are not mentioned with regard to their own individual states, advantages, or disadvantages, but solely with regard to the fate of the Jewish Church generally ; which, we are told again and again, was a chosen, holy, and peculiar people, purely with regard to the situation in which they had been placed, and not with regard to their own individual characters ; for, in this point of view, they are usually addressed as stubborn, stiff-necked, and rebellious, in the extreme.

Now, with reference to the passage, “afore prepared unto glory” (ὡς προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν), no one will suppose, that it can possibly be stretched to mean any thing more than what the prophecies following it are intended, as predictions (not metaphysically) to teach ; namely, to inform us that God had in his goodness provided for the calling and blessing of the Gentiles, who thus became vessels fitted for the further purposes of mercy. The passages, then, may thus be paraphrased : “*Vessels which He afore declared should be put into a situation fitting them to receive the grace which should bring them to glory : even us whom He hath called, &c.*” Where the word (προητοίμασεν) *predestined*, can with no colour of probability be taken abstractedly and absolutely, but with reference to the *divine will*, not as investigated from the nature of the attributes, but as *revealed by the Prophets* ; because the Writers of Scripture never expressly appeal to any *such principles* : their constant practice being to appeal to the declarations of the revealed word, and not to the properties of the Divine mind, as we find in the cases already adduced. The predestination, therefore, urged in this place, and I will affirm in every other, rests not on *metaphysical*, but *authoritative, grounds* ; nor can the calling of the Gentiles rest on

minata ; id etiam refellemus. Supplicia et tormenta, nec non egregias remunerationes pro unius cujusque operum dignitate retribuui, per prophetas edocti, id quam verum est, profitemur. Nam si hoc non sit, sed fato omnia fiant, nullum omnino erit liberum in nobis arbitrium (οὔτε πὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ὕλης, i. e. *and in no respect (rested) upon us*, which appears to me a different sentiment from the *nullum omnino liberum arbitrium*, &c. of the Latin translator). Si enim fatale sit, hunc quidem esse bonum, illum verò malum ; neque ille fuerit probandus, neque hic reprehendendus,” &c. *Apol.* p. 83. This is the more remarkable in Justin, because he had been a philosopher, and appears in a few instances still to have retained some of his original notions.

any other; because, as already stated, no other is recognised by revelation.

But it may also be urged, that to predestine any event, must with the Almighty signify, that it shall not only come to pass, but also that it shall be brought about by an immediate exertion of his power. My reply is: The purposes predestinated or predicted just alluded to, came to pass, and these were certainly effected by an immediate exertion of the Divine power. This, then, will satisfy the terms of Scripture; and, when this is done, the passages themselves cannot be adduced to prove some other point; much less an abstract question apparently the most foreign possible to their purpose. Nor, even if we allow the question, is it in my power, or that of any other person, to determine what is, or what is not, now brought about by an exclusive exertion of the Divine energies. I may say, however, that Scriptural instruction proceeds not upon the doubtful results of such questions. It treats men as rational agents, such as can discriminate between good and bad in a practical way; and as having power enough to perform some things, and to abstain from others. Upon complying, then, with its precepts, further and sufficient assistance is promised; and, as far as human reason or knowledge can go, this is the most rational and suitable way of proceeding with such beings. In the case of Abraham the commandments given are, "*Walk before me, and be thou perfect.*" "*Sacrifice thy son, thine only son to me;*" and to the performance of these, promises are annexed. Abraham obeys, and the promises are realised. Similar doctrines are ever after urged upon the Jewish Church; and the consequences have invariably been, such as we are taught to expect should follow. The same doctrines, and, indeed, the very same commandments, varied only in such a way as to suit the circumstances under which they are urged, are still given; and, as formerly, the consequences predicted are constant. Abstract reasoning has never been resorted to, and probably on this account: it would, in cases of this kind, require an extent of knowledge which we do not and cannot possess; and would, therefore, tend rather to bewilder than to edify, to perplex than to instruct. But, in a practical sense, I mean, in appealing to God's previously revealed will, pre-

destination is not only a most intelligible, but a most comfortable doctrine ; it informs the believer, that God has graciously provided for him, as a chosen vessel, mercies great beyond conception, although he may not be a lineal descendant of Abraham — that God, who had first separated, made holy, and peculiar to himself, the descendants of the Patriarch, and who then declared that this privilege should again be opened to all mankind, has now done this ; and, that the Gentile has now before him the means of grace, which, if duly applied, shall insure him both the hope and the fruition of glory—that the promise is sure to *all the seed*, provided it stand on the faith of Abraham ; and that between the Jew and the Gentile there is now *no difference, the same Lord over all being rich unto ALL that call upon him.* Chap. x. 12, 13.

It will now be necessary only to cite the Apostle's application of this argument to shew, that the Christian believer stands on precisely the same grounds with the Jewish, equally liable to mistake, to failure, and to forfeit all the privileges thus presented for his good. Chap. xi. 17—23. "*If some of the branches,*" says he, "*be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree ; BOAST NOT against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF THEY WERE BROKEN OFF ; and thou standest BY FAITH. BE NOT HIGH-MINDED, BUT FEAR : For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore, the goodness and severity of God : ON THEM WHICH FELL, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, IF THOU CONTINUE IN HIS GOODNESS : otherwise THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF. And they also, IF THEY ABIDE NOT IN UNBELIEF, SHALL BE GRAFTED IN : for God is able to graft them in again.*" In the Epistle to the Hebrews, too, this subject is treated precisely in the same manner. Chap. iii. 6, &c. "*But Christ as a Son over his own house ; whose house we are, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation*

in the wilderness, &c. (v. 12.) TAKE HEED, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day : LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end ; while it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, as in the provocation . . . But with whom was he grieved forty years ? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness ? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not ? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Chap. iv.) LET US THEREFORE FEAR, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For UNTO US WAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED, AS WELL AS UNTO THEM : but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. (v. 11.) LET US LABOUR THEREFORE TO ENTER INTO THAT REST, LEST ANY MAN FALL AFTER THE SAME EXAMPLE OF UNBELIEF."

Nothing, I think, can be more explicit and obvious than the doctrine of the Apostle is on this head. The goodness of God is, according to him, so blended with the responsibility of man, as to make a whole infinitely more harmonious and encouraging than any thing to be found in all the philosophy the world ever saw. Man is, indeed, represented as a short-sighted, weak, and sinful creature, endued nevertheless with knowledge extensive enough duly to estimate the boon of mercy here proposed, and with power sufficient to render at least an imperfect but willing obedience to the precepts laid down. Upon a cordial reception of the means, and a sincere desire and endeavour to comply with the terms, all necessary aid is promised, on the one hand to concur and further ; and of mercy, on the other, to accept and bless. And thus, while all confidence in self is abjured, and every fear kept alive, lest the believer should fall from his steadfastness ; the very weaknesses and liability to error and to lapse, to which he well knows he is subject, will only tend to make him the more firmly place his faith on Him who is subject to no such defects, and whose grace he also knows

shall never fail: not because these services have any thing good in themselves, but because He has commanded that they should be thus tendered, and has also declared that this labour “shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

It may now be proper to examine a few other passages of Scripture usually cited on these points, for the purpose of ascertaining whether they coincide with what has here been said or not. The following is generally advanced as one of the strongest (Jer. xxxii. 40):—“And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” This, as it stands, seems certainly very strong; and to convey an *assurance* that no possible failure can happen to him who only believes: our principal question will therefore be: Is it an exact and faithful rendering of the original Scripture? I answer: I believe it is not. The passage is this:—

וְכִרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֶשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם לְהִשְׁיבִי אוֹתָם וְאֶת־יְרֵאָתִי אֶתֵּן מֵעַלִּי : בְּלִבָּכֶם לְבִלְתִּי סוּר מֵעָלַי, which I would translate: “And I will (surely) make with them the everlasting covenant, (by) which I will not turn back from (following) after them, for my doing them good; and my fear (or religion) will I place in (or on) their hearts, for (their) not receding from me:” or, more freely, “I will make the everlasting covenant with them, by virtue of which I, on my part, will never cease to bless them; and, I will, by this means, lay my fear upon them, in order that they may not depart from me.”

It is a remarkable fact, that this is the general sense given by the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Syriac versions, as well as by the Targumist:—how any other could have been thought of by our translators, I am at a loss to discover. In this case, then, we find nothing more said than what is every where else inculcated in the Scripture; namely, that God has, on his part, promised to be gracious; but that he has laid upon them who would be the objects of his mercy, a law to which they are bound to render the most constant and hearty obedience.

It will, perhaps, be unnecessary to examine any more of the passages usually appealed to on this head; the most decisive one, as it has been thought, is surely in the most perfect

accordance with the general terms of the covenant of grace : it will, therefore, be a work of supererogation to discuss others.

Let us now examine a few of those in which predestination or election are mentioned, and see how they are to be understood. In Rom. viii. 29, it is said : “ For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate* (to be) CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” The original is remarkably strong here : “ Ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισε συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, &c. For (those) whom he foreknew (or afore recognised in his promise), he also afore determined (defined as) conformed with the image of his Son. The predetermination, therefore (or rather predefinition), of God’s future servants was, that they should be like Christ,—holy, harmless, without rebuke. The prefiguring or determining spoken of, therefore, was, in this case, rather as to their characters, than as to the end finally to be attained to. And this is confirmed by the context immediately following : “ Whom he did predestinate, them he also called (*i. e.* to the means of grace now in these latter times); and whom he called, them he also justified (*i. e.* those who have obeyed this call, God has pronounced to be pardoned, just, and acceptable in his sight); and whom he justified, them he also glorified (*i. e.* those who are, by this means, declared to be just, are also declared to be the heirs of glory). The call is, therefore, in this place, mentioned with regard to the means, and not as being unconditional to the end. Again, in Eph. i. 4, &c. : “ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love*: having predestinated us UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN by Jesus Christ to himself; WHEREIN *he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*. (11.) Being predestinated—(12) *that we should be to the praise of his glory*—(13) in whom also, *after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, &c.*” Here predestination comes first, then adoption and belief, and lastly the effects, to give glory to God, and to receive the gift of the Spirit, as a pledge of salvation.

Again, in St. Peter, 1 Ep. i. 2 : “ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of

the Spirit, UNTO OBEDIENCE and SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST." Again, 1 Pet. ii. 9: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; *that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*" Again, Rev. xvii. 14: "They that are with him are called, and chosen, *and faithful.*" Again, 2 Thes. ii. 13: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation (in order to obtain salvation) *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*; WHEREUNTO HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL, TO THE OBTAINING OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." Again, John, xv. 16: "I have chosen you, and ordained you, *that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*"

It was not necessary, perhaps, to cite all these passages; but it has been done, in order to impress upon the reader the astonishing care taken by the writers of the New Testament on this subject: because there is a great and important difference in the question, whether we are called or chosen, to the means as instrumental, or whether this be done to the end as absolute: and because, to be rightly informed on this subject, cannot but have an immense influence on the character and conduct of believers. That the Jews laboured under great mistakes, in this respect, there can be no doubt; and hence the admonition of the Baptist: "*Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree THAT BRINGETH NOT FORTH GOOD FRUIT, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*" And it is worthy of remark, that, in all the epistles,—after laying down, and perhaps discussing, the doctrines of the Gospel,—the conclusion made is, a most solemn admonition to the observance of every good affection and work; in order, as it should seem, *that they may be neither barren nor unfruitful in THE KNOWLEDGE of Christ*; or, *that an abundant entrance might be ministered unto them into his kingdom.*

We may now consider a few other passages, different indeed in form from the preceding, but which are usually appealed to in support of the doctrine of an absolute and particular predestination. The most decisive places, as it is thought, on

this subject are, those which speak of Christ *being fore-ordained before the foundation of the world* (1 Peter, i. 20);—of believers having been chosen *before the foundation of the world*, as in Eph. i. 4;—of the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*;—and of the names of those *not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world* (Rev. xiii. 8): and, perhaps, it may be granted, that if predestination is any where taught on abstract principles, it must be in passages of this class. Let us now consider them separately. In the first, then, it is said, “Christ, as a lamb—who verily was fore-ordained *before the foundation of the world*; but was manifest *in these last times* for you.” In the phraseology of this passage, we have an obvious opposition, in the expressions *foundation of the world*, and *these last times*: and, if we can discover what the last must mean, we shall, perhaps, be enabled, also, to see what the first does. By *the last times*, then, in this passage, must evidently be meant, those in which the Apostle wrote; for he says *these last times*: and if we turn to Acts, ii. 16, 17, we shall find this Apostle applying the phrase *last days* to the same period. And, again, the *last time*, 1 Peter, i. 5, cannot but relate to the same time. Again, in 2 Timothy, iii. 1, the *last days* are mentioned with reference to a prophecy uttered by our Lord, which was fulfilled in the destruction of the Jewish polity, &c. (Matthew, xxiv. 3, 6, 14, 29, 34). Now, if we examine this chapter in Matthew, we shall find, ver. 3, that the prophecy is given in answer to the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the END OF THE WORLD?” In the Gospel of St. Mark, this prophecy is repeated, and is there given in answer to the question, as to when the Temple should be destroyed (xiii. 4, &c. 30, 31). The prophecy is again repeated in St. Luke (xxi. 6, 32); and this closes, as in the preceding cases, by stating, that *heaven and earth should pass away*. To this *last day, the latter days*, &c., frequent allusions are made by the Prophets, insomuch that even the rabbinical Commentators, as well as the Targumists, are unanimous in declaring, that they can mean no other than the days of the Messiah. To their opinion, in this case, may be added, that of most of the writers of the New Testament. In Heb. ix. 26, we have, “But now, once in THE END OF THE WORLD, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of

himself;" Ib. i. 2, "Hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son." In 2 Peter, iii. 3, the prophecies of our Lord are referred to; and, for their fulfilment, *the last days*, and those in which the Apostle was then writing, are fixed upon. In 1 John, ii. 18, this prophecy is again alluded to; and then it is added, "Little children, *it is the last time*; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even NOW are there many Antichrists; whereby WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST TIME." And in St. Jude, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that—there should be mockers in *the last time*, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they," it is added, "who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit:" where it is impossible to suppose the Apostle is speaking of any other times than those in which he was writing. From all which, it must be too clear to admit of a moment's doubt, that the phrases, *the last days*, *the last time*, *the end of the world*, &c., were used to mark the times, during which the Jewish polity was drawing to a close. Now, if the close of the Jewish polity is here intimated by the *end of the world*, heaven and earth passing away, or the like; then, by *the foundation of the world*,—unless some restricting clause, or some circumstance in the narration, call for the contrary,—the commencement of this polity was probably intended to be meant, and not the period of the creation generally. Now, what does the context in our first passage call for? (1st Peter, i. 19, 20.) "With the precious blood of Christ, *as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*." That either the paschal lamb, or a lamb sacrificed in still earlier times, is here the victim had in view, perhaps there can be no reasonable doubt; and in this sense Christ is termed the *Lamb of God* (John, i. 29.): and in 1 Cor. v. 7, we are told, with reference to the same appointment, "that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The Lamb, therefore, alluded to by St. Peter, cannot, by any possible stretch of reason, be made to apply to any appointment made prior to the creation of the world: for of such we have no direct information; and to speak of what may have lain dormant in the Divine mind abstractedly, is to argue on grounds unknown to Scripture: but, if we apply it to that sacrificed either before, or at the egress from Egypt,

we shall refer to an appointment made before the foundation of the world, in this sense of that term, and fully satisfy the words of St. Peter.

The second passage adduced (Eph. i. 4, &c.), commences with thanking God for blessings conferred through Christ, "according," it is said, "as he hath chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy," &c. From the first terms with which this passage commences, namely, "according as" (καθὼς), we are led to suppose that the blessings mentioned, had been conferred in conformity with something previously mentioned; and, as this relates to a *choice* said to have been made, it cannot, by scriptural analogy, be carried higher than the times of Abraham; for in him was the first instance of choice on record made, and this had an especial respect to the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. Here, then, was tangible matter to which the Apostle could appeal; and it was such as to allow of no dispute in the estimation of every believer in Scripture. This circumstance did then, in the style of Scripture, precede the foundation of the world; and in that sense must it have been used. In the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, some additional light is thrown on the subject. "*Having*" (now), it is said, "*made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath (had) purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might (would) gather together in one, all things in Christ, &c.*" The thing here said to have been purposed for fulfilment, in the fulness of time, and which had now been made known, cannot, by any legitimate mode of reasoning grounded on scriptural truth, be carried higher than the times of the promise or prediction of Christ's coming: an appeal may indeed be made to the omniscience of the Divine mind; but to suppose this was done by the Apostle, is to suppose that for which there is not the least ground in Scripture, and to contend that he argued upon revelation, as if no revelation had actually been made. Besides, the *mystery* here mentioned, cannot be referred to any other than the *mystery of godliness* elsewhere urged; namely, that of *God manifested in the flesh* (1 Tim. iii. 16), which, indeed, had been darkly taught since the world began, but had now been made manifest; and by the *Scriptures of*

the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, had been made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith (see Rom. xvi. 25, 26). And, if the Scriptures of the Prophets, as here mentioned, had been given with the view of insuring the obedience of faith, it will be difficult to suppose, how the Apostle could, on any occasion, appeal to any other authority. Again, in the 11th verse, this is ascribed to “the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” It might now be asked, What *purpose*, and What *counsel*, can here possibly be meant, if we exclude that already brought to light by the promise, and urged by the Prophets? The promise was one of a free salvation by faith; and to Christ all the Prophets bore testimony. This was the salvation expected by Jacob, and by all the Prophets down to the times of the Desire of all nations, mentioned by the last, and hailed by Simeon on the presentation of our Lord in the Temple. It was not the ideal phantom of the philosopher, but the *sure word of prophecy*, the oath immutable, which none but God could make; and on which alone the believer could rely as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

Let us now consider our next passage. After what has been said on Christ’s suffering as the paschal lamb, we shall find little difficulty in such passages as this (Rev. xiii. 8,) in which we are told that “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world*.”

That Christ is the Lamb here mentioned, there can, I presume, be no doubt; and it is, perhaps, equally clear, that the custom of sacrificing a lamb as typical of Christ, even before the Jewish polity had a being, is also alluded to in the expression, “before the foundation of the world;” because, as already remarked, St. John is speaking as a divine, and not as a philosopher: he is alluding to fact, and not to opinion: and the only difficulty that now can remain, must be on the passage, “whose names are not written in the book of life,” &c. It may be imagined, from the wording of this extract, that it is necessary these names also should be written, in the book mentioned, before the foundation of the world; but this is by no means the case. The passage begins by stating something evidently future to

the time in which St. John was writing, “shall worship him, (προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν or αὐτῷ); and to this time, the following “*are not written*,” (οὐ γεγράφται, have not been written), is to be referred. The sense will then be—all who are not, or rather have not been, previously enrolled in the book of the Lamb represented as slain before the commencement of the Jewish polity, shall worship the beast, and take part with him against the saints of God.

Such, then, I believe is the true meaning of all passages of this kind. I have taken those which seemed to present the greatest difficulties, for the purpose of satisfying both myself and others as to their real import. Difficult, I will allow, these passages have been made to appear; but this seems to have resulted rather from the application of erroneous principles of interpretation than any thing else. When, however, we find all centering in God, beginning with his sovereign and gracious will, and ending in an intelligible exertion of his mercy for some plain necessary and practical end, we arrive at that on which we can rest in safety and peace—something to which reason and experience can give its loud and reiterated Amen; and on which the believer can joyfully live and happily die; an assurance which rests on the Rock of Ages, and which nothing can disturb, agitate, or destroy. It is not intended here to be affirmed, let it be remembered, that every passage alluding to the *foundation of the world*, or to any period prior to it, must always be referred to the commencement of the Jewish polity. Such passages as, “the glory which I had with thee *before the foundation of the world*,” are best explained by others relating to the same subject, and in which we are told that Christ “was in the beginning with God, and was God, and that all things were made by him” (John, i. 1—3). I only contend for an extended view of every passage in connection with its context, parallel places, analogy of faith, and every other genuine method of interpretation. But I object to the introduction of foreign principles—to *science falsely so called*—and affirm, that almost all the darkness and doubt under which God’s word has been made to labour, has arisen from this corrupted source; and, that it was science of this sort which first obscured the sacred Scriptures, and then objected to their credibility, suitableness, and authority.

It will be necessary to make one remark more on this subject, which is this : It is not intended, in any sense, to deny the omniscience of God, or his knowledge of all his works from the beginning to the end ; but only to maintain, that the doctrines urged are not proposed on these grounds. The absolute right, uncontrollable will, inscrutable wisdom and prescience of the Almighty, are, indeed, constantly dwelt on in the Scriptures ; but then this is done in order to vindicate his wisdom, goodness, and mercy, in making known his will in any way. The doctrines proposed and recommended are those only which have at one time or another been revealed ; not those which may be inferred from the attributes of the Almighty, or be thought fit and expedient for the good of man.* The commandment is ever specific ; the promise, or thing predestinated or foretold, always to be found ; and then, without any circuitous mode of deduction whatever, an unreserved obedience to both is called for, for the purpose either of avoiding the chastisements of God's wrath,—of realising the blessings proposed in his promises,—or of giving glory to him in honouring his laws, and receiving and enjoying all his mercies. Metaphysics may indeed be resorted to in some cases ; they may enable us to see the reasonableness, suitableness, and wisdom of God's laws ; and so far the human intellect may be made to co-operate with the Divine appointments ; but they can go no further. Religion, considered as such, can stand on ground no less cogent than *that of authority* ; and this, it is out of the nature of metaphysics to assume.

Whatever, then, may be thought of the scriptural doctrine of predestination and election, it appears to be perfectly rational, intelligible, and practical ; and most suitable to the purpose for which it was originally taught. That the means by which mercy is to be obtained, must be such as the will of Him who is to shew mercy shall appoint, there can be no possible doubt ; and such is the doctrine of our Scriptures here. With this right, then, we can have nothing whatever to do : our only question is : Whether the means so appointed will, or will not, suit our wants as men ; and whether we can rely upon the privileges being granted under all possible

* See Tit. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2, 10, 11, 12. 2 Pet. iii. 2.

circumstances. From what has been said, I think it must appear, that the affirmative is here the truth; and that these appointments are calculated above all things, to call forth our energies, to strengthen our hope, and to demand our praise; to reduce the evil propensities of our nature to the observance of every good work; and to give the believer such an assurance of the favour of the Almighty as nothing earthly can invalidate. This is, indeed, what philosophy never laid claim to, never has effected, and never can effect. It is what morality, singly considered, has never realised: and, in a word, if it be asked, What is that, which will at once give knowledge to the head, administer the best affections to the heart, afford the greatest courage where courage is most wanted, the greatest peace, hope, and charity, where every earthly support has failed?—the answer is: It is faith in Christ, and the patient waiting for the covenanted mercies of God in him.

Having shewn, then, that there is no such thing as unconditional or metaphysical election or predestination taught in the Scriptures; it should seem probable, that if there be also such a thing as reprobation or final condemnation spoken of, this would also be proposed with reference to certain specified conditions, such as would, in one way or other, fall within the power of men to satisfy; and this is universally done. We are told, indeed, that God bestows his peculiar favours when and where he pleases; but it is no where said, that, in every possible case in which these are withheld, eternal condemnation will assuredly follow. For here, the question can be only as to those who have, or have not, heard of the Scriptures. With regard to those who have heard of them, all are invited to partake of the mercies proposed, in the most unreserved manner; and it is positively declared, that *God willeth not the death of the sinner, but that ALL should be converted and live*. And again, in every instance on record it is positively declared, that all who have suffered, or who shall suffer, God's vengeance, are those and those only, who refuse to conform with his law. But, with reference to those who have not heard of this law, we can only say: We have *no knowledge whatever* as to what their fate will or will not be. Reason can tell us nothing on the subject, and revelation is silent. It is there-

fore our bounden duty here to be silent also. If, indeed, the heathen are still in a state of darkness on this subject, without hope and without God in the world, let us labour—whatever our forefathers may have done—to relieve them: humanity suggests this as incumbent on us, and the word of God delivers it as a *positive command*. In both these cases, then, our duty is clear; and from it let us be careful never to swerve.

There is, however, an argument occasionally advanced on this subject which ought to be noticed in this place: it is said,—that if it is *given* to some to believe, as the Scripture positively declares, must it not follow, that those to whom this power is not given, *cannot* believe, and that they must as necessarily perish, or, which is the same thing, be reprobate? My answer is: It is said, indeed (Phil. i. 29),—“Unto you it is *given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;” to which the passage (Eph. ii. 8),—“For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God*,” is usually adduced as a parallel. I must here observe, that I am by no means anxious to depart from the usage of the authorised version; but, in instances in which the sense of the original does not appear to be fully given, I trust I shall be excused in doing so. In the first of these passages, then, a more literal and exact translation would be, “For to you has been *graciously afforded*, as it respects Christ, not only the believing in him, but also the suffering for his sake;” or, in other words,—“To you hath the favour been granted, with regard to Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer on his account.” I object to the rendering of τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, in the first part of the verse, by “*in the behalf of Christ*,” on two grounds: first, because this, and that of τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, by “*to suffer for his sake*,” at the end of the verse, introduce a manifest tautology, which is just the same thing as to say, “To you it is given *for the sake of Christ*, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer *for his sake*;” for, although the words *in behalf of* are not identically the same with *for his sake*; yet they have the same meaning, and appear to me to be intended as an equivalent rendering. My other reason is: the doctrine thus inculcated does not correspond with that generally taught in the Scriptures; certainly,

obedience and love to Christ are no where recommended in phraseology like this : besides, ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ cannot be fairly construed here to signify the same thing with αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα : and therefore I should suppose, that *for his sake* is not applicable in either case. Another consideration is, ἐχαρίσθη cannot be construed as equivalent to ἐδόθη, which has been done by our translators. Δίδωμι is, indeed, frequently parallel in signification to the Hebrew נָתַן or יָצַק, implying *appointing, ordaining, &c.* ; but this cannot be said of χαρίζομαι. In this we evidently have the sense of χάρις transformed into a verb ; and the *free gift* of redemption through Christ must consequently be meant. (See Schleusner, Bretschneider, and Wahl, under these words.)

Now, it may be asked, Are the *means* of believing and suffering, or the *power*, here most probably meant ? Of the possibility or absolute impossibility of exercising belief, I think no direct mention occurs in Scripture ; nor is the question of man's ability or inability, in this respect, ever mooted ; this would be to have anticipated the inquiries of Mr. Locke. Besides, had it not been taken for granted, that men had something like the ability to accept or reject in this respect, it would be difficult to say, why the Scripture, or any other means of grace, was given. But, to the Gospel of Christ, as a *means* whereby belief may be exercised, appeal is constantly made ; it is the great and essential source of all scriptural instruction ; and, whether it is appealed to most in the Old or the New Testament, none can say. To this, we know, belief was cordially given by some, even in the very worst times of the Jewish polity : and so powerful was its announcement in the days of the Apostles, that the philosophical systems of both Greece and Rome crumbled to dust before it. By St. Paul, it is termed “the sword of the spirit, *quick and powerful* ;” and said to be, that which is *able* to make wise even to salvation. Of the darkness, ignorance, and blindness of the natural or worldly man, we read much ; but of his invulnerability in this respect, we are never once informed ; much less assured, that some all-overpowering effort must be exerted to subdue it.

But let us proceed to our second passage, which has been supposed to contain something still more positive on this question. “For by grace ye are saved through faith,” it

is said; “and that not of yourselves; (it is) the gift of God.” We are here informed, as we are every where else, by the Apostle, that *we are saved through faith*,—that is, through it as a means: and we are elsewhere told, that this “*faith cometh by hearing*,” which is, indeed, *an ordinary*, but not *an extraordinary*, gift of God. Faith then, as a means, comes by the ordinary faculty of hearing; and the declarations of the Scripture, when proposed through this faculty to the mind, may, as far as we know, either be acceded to, or not, as the hearer shall judge and determine. If acceded to, we are taught that further powers, and such as shall be sufficient, shall be communicated; if not, the truth seems to be, that even those afforded by nature will become deteriorated. We have yet no reason, therefore, for concluding that faith is here spoken of as a gift, but as a means to be employed. In the next place, “*grace*” or *favour*, is generally taught to be the *efficient means* of salvation; of which we are perhaps here, and certainly elsewhere, instructed, that faith is the *instrumental*: and, from what follows, it appears highly probable, that it is by *this efficient means, grace, or favour*, that the gift of God—salvation—is here said to be secured. “*For*,” it is added (v. 10), “*we are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” Now I say, *this creation to good works*, as well as *this preordination to them*, must be the immediate effect of grace, not of faith; because the purpose was completed and made known, as far at least as the Apostles were concerned, before any exertion of faith could have taken place. Salvation, then, which is by grace, must be the gift of God mentioned here, and not the operation of faith. The gracious and uninfluenced goodness of God is appealed to; and it is appealed to as the efficient, and not as the instrumental, means of salvation. In the 9th verse, then, “*works*,” or rather the merit of works, is to be opposed to unmerited grace; just as it is in Rom. iii. 24, iv. 4, ix. 11, xi. 6, &c., and where, generally, *faith* is urged as the means. The construction of the passage itself is also worthy of remark: τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ τῆς πίστεως, καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν· Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον. The phrase ἐστε σεσωσμένοι, *ye are saved*, is evidently the principal subject of the proposition enounced: τῇ χάριτι, *by*

grace, is premised in order strongly to mark the efficient means by which this is to be secured : διὰ πίστεως, *by faith*, is then given in order to determine the instrumental: the first is the gracious boon of the Deity, the second the means to be employed by man. In the last place, *the being saved*, the effect not resulting from us (καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν), is affirmed to be *God's gift* (Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον): and the whole passage may thus be expressed : Your being saved results not from you ; it is God's gift, and is afforded by his grace, by, or through, the means of the law of faith.

Another passage frequently appealed to is, Phil. ii. 13,—*“ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”* Here, it is said, the *very will* is influenced ; the actions, also, are ascribed to the operation of God. True, I answer ; and this is what is invariably said with reference to believers,—they are promised an extraordinary assistance. This has been taught most clearly in both Testaments ; and it is the great sheet-anchor of the believer's hope. But we are also taught to believe, that this is not exerted in the face of all resistance. Those who have once believed, it is intimated, may fall away ; and further, that the last state of such an one will be worse than the first.* Obediently to believe seems to be a main part of the Christian's warfare ; and under these circumstances alone is the co-operating influence promised. This matter is, however, put out of all doubt in another place (1st Thess. ii. 13): *“ For this cause, also,”* it is said, *“ thank we God without ceasing, because, WHEN YE RECEIVED the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which EFFECTUALLY WORKETH also IN YOU THAT BELIEVE.”* The *influence* of the word is here ascribed to the soundness of the faith by which it had been received ; and subsequent to this is its effectual operation dated : and, if this be ascribed to the energies of the Holy Spirit, working both to will and to do *in the believer*, we have nothing more than what is constantly insisted upon throughout the Scriptures. The truth seems to be, there is no more practical difficulty in believing the proposition, that “ Christ Jesus

* Heb. vi. 4 ; 2 Peter, ii. 21.

came into the world to save sinners," than there is in receiving the postulate, that all the parts of any thing are equal to the whole : both are proposed as truths ; and when it is found, upon inquiry, that they are so, reason is bound to receive them. Precisely in this way is Christianity proposed in our Scriptures ; but, inasmuch as formidable difficulties are really opposed to its effectual adoption, which is not the case with our postulate just adverted to ; means are also proposed, by which every necessary assistance shall be secured : these have been termed "*the means of grace.*" The real difficulties are : to realise in the believer the mind of Christ ; the denial of self ; the life of faith ; to bear and forbear ; and to hold fast an unshaken integrity, under all circumstances, however flattering or however terrific. It is for these ends that the effectual influences of the Spirit are promised, which indeed are alone adequate to produce them. The devils, we are told, believe and tremble ; and so may man, and yet be destitute of every saving gift and grace of God. But, to believe to the saving of the soul, seems to require, that God not only afford the truths to be believed and embraced in the first instance, but also that he co-operate with the believer after he has received them, in order to bring about those ends which the weakness of flesh and blood never can.

It may perhaps still be suggested, that it will be difficult to see what the Apostle can be supposed to thank God for, if it is not His having given these Philippians the *power* to believe. I answer : I can see no difficulty in supposing, that he might have had in view the final *means*, which he himself had been the instrument of proposing, namely, *the Gospel of Christ*. For, there can be no doubt, this had been given by God's grace ; and, that God had, by an extraordinary act of favour, raised up the Apostle to preach and enforce it, is equally true. This, then, I think, was cause sufficient to call forth the Apostle's thanks ; and was, most likely, the real cause in this instance.

That the power to believe, to hear, and to think, are God's gifts, there certainly can be no doubt ; but, then, they are *ordinary*, not *extraordinary* gifts ; which leaves our conclusion untouched ; namely, that the *power to believe*, in the first instance, is no where ascribed in Scripture to an extraordinary influence of the Spirit. And if this be true, a *want*

of *faith* in any man, cannot be ascribed to any positive withholding of God's favours where the doctrine of the Gospel has been once proposed; and, consequently, no such thing is taught in the Scripture as *absolute* and *fore-ordained* individual reprobation. If the case of Pharaoh be adduced, I shall reply, as on a former occasion: Pharaoh is not mentioned by St. Paul for the purpose of shewing, that those to whom the terms of the Gospel are proposed, *have it not in their power* to receive them;* but only to bear testimony to the fact, that no earthly power, however great, could prevail against the purposes which God had formed with regard to his Church. The same may, indeed, be said of the king of Assyria, of Babylon, and of Persia, where the first was termed the *rod of God's power*, and the last *his anointed*: in every case God's purposes, as to his people, were solely had in view: which, therefore, could not have been intended to teach us, that either the one or the other of these persons was absolutely predestinated to life or to death: and, if this was not the thing intended to be taught, then, to infer any such doctrine from the instances themselves, must be inadmissible.†

* The truly philosophical and scriptural apologist Arnobius thus speaks on this subject: "Non æqualiter liberat qui æqualiter omnes vocat, haud ab indulgentiâ principali quemquam repellit, aut respuit, qui sublimibus, infirmis, servis, feminis, pueris, uniformiter potestatem veniendi ad se facit? Patet, inquit, omnibus fons vitæ, neque ab jure potandi quisquam prohibetur, aut pellitur." Lib. ii. p. 84.

† So Arnobius: "Quid ergo nos? Undè? Responsionis necessitas nulla est. Sive enim possumus dicere, sive minùs valemus, nec possumus, utrumque apud nos parvum est: nec in magnis ponderibus duximus, vel ignorare illud, vel scire; unum solum posuisse contenti, NIHIL A DEO PRINCIPE, QUOD SIT NOCENS, ATQUE EXITIABILE, PROFICISCI: hoc tenemus, hoc novimus, in hac unâ consistimus cognitionis, et scientiæ veritate: nihil ab eo fieri, nisi quod sit omnibus salutare; quod dulce; quod amoris, et gaudii, lætitiæque plenissimum; quod infinitas habeat, atque incorruptibiles voluptates; quod sibi quisque contingere votis omnibus expetat, forisque ab his esse exitiabile, ac mortiferum ducat." *Adversus Gentes*, lib. ii. (edit. 1634.) p. 78.

SECTION IX.

ON HUMAN FREE WILL.

HAVING discussed these questions as far as it seemed necessary to our purpose, we now come to offer a few remarks on the doctrine of what has been termed the *freedom of the will*. We shall not stop here to discuss the propriety or impropriety of the terms, *freedom of the will*, *free will*, &c. it being sufficiently manifest that they involve an absurdity; because, whether right or wrong, our inquiry would gain nothing by doing so. In considering this question, then, we shall proceed rather with reference to *things* than to *words*: because it is from these alone that any good conclusion can be expected.

The first question, then, will be: Is the human mind *perfectly at liberty to think and determine*, without reference to any other consideration, or is it only *partially* so? My answer is: I know of no *absolute* restraint placed on the operations of the human mind: neither Scripture, reason, nor experience, speaks of any such restraint; and so far we may conclude that there is none. Man may, as far as we can see, *will, purpose, plan*, &c., the wildest things imaginable: and, from the vast abundance of such phenomena in the intellectual world, we may, perhaps, rest assured that no restraint, either natural or supernatural, has been imposed in these respects.

There is, however, another faculty implanted in man, called Reason, the business of which is carefully to consider the nature both of thoughts and of things, and then to determine (which is named *judging*), whether such thoughts or things ought or ought not to be entertained; and then to act as counsellor in directing the conduct of the individual. Now, so far as this faculty interferes with the *will*, its liberty must be curtailed;* that is to say, whenever reason deter-

* And in the degree to which a man lays claim to the character of a *rational agent*, in the same will the freedom of his *will* be controlled. He, therefore, who approximates nearest to perfection, must in the same proportion be regulated in his thoughts, words, and deeds, by *principles* which he has found to be good. He will, consequently, be less than any other man the subject of caprice; more than any other, actuated by those laws which he knows to be most advantageous to human society, and best calculated to honour its Author: in other words, he will be the best Christian; the

mines that a thought, action, or project, is such as ought not to be entertained, the individual is bound, unless he give up the claim of being considered a *rational creature*, no longer to entertain such thought, action, or project. For example, I am at liberty to suppose that two and two will make six; or, that a telescope may be made so powerful as to enable me to discover of what specific form the particles composing the disk of the moon, or of any one of the planets, are; and in either or both of these positions I may persevere: but when I have been shewn that the one is *absolutely*, and the other *physically* impossible, I am no longer at liberty (unless I claim the privilege of a fool or a madman) to entertain those opinions. A motive now has been proposed, if not a *violent one*, as Paley would term it, yet one so potent as to insure the conclusion, that I can no longer continue to hold those positions. In cases such as these, therefore, although the power of volition may be possessed to an indefinite extent theoretically, yet no such power can exist *in practice*; at least in those who lay claim to reason in any degree. Where the reason is, indeed, weak, ill-informed, or perverted, the decision may be wrong, but it must always be made; and when this is done, the liberty of the will is limited.

Now, if we trace cases downwards, from those presenting the highest to those presenting the lowest degrees of probability, we shall at last arrive at those in which we may either have no knowledge, or probabilities may be so nearly balanced as to leave nothing on which the judgment can fix: in these cases, then, the Will will remain entirely unfettered. If, for example, two friends were to propose to me for decision the question, whether the language of the Old or New Testament will be the medium of intercourse among the blest; my answer must be: You are at *perfect liberty* to adopt which side

best citizen of the world; and the person best prepared to be translated to a more perfect state of being. Nor will this entire subjection to principle in any way diminish the power of refusing the evil and choosing the good; on the contrary, this will strengthen it in the greatest possible degree. Where another man will doubt and hesitate eternally, the man of principle will act at once, and he will act rightly. His law provides for consequences; hesitation is with him out of place. Such an one, therefore, will be the best example of a *decided character*; a distinction to which all think it creditable at least to lay claim.

of the question you please, because I know of nothing whatever likely to influence the judgment of either of you. And again, if two persons, in every respect equally well qualified and recommended, should solicit an office which I may have to dispose of; I conceive, reason and judgment would have nothing to do in the case, and that I should be left *perfectly at liberty* to exercise my Will. The number or the different shades of cases which will fall between these extremes, will be exceedingly great, while those which occupy the extreme places very small; and consequently, those cases which will be so cogent as to carry conviction with them to every mind; as also those left entirely to *the Will*, or what is generally termed the *caprice*, will be few. In the great mass, reason and judgment must predominate; but this rarely to such a degree as to preclude all possibility of doubt; because we are not possessed of experience sufficient to see and judge clearly of all the bearings of every question.

The powers of the mind, in this respect, seem to be very much on a par with those of the body. Any man not fettered, or otherwise not deprived of the use of his limbs, may use them in any way he pleases, as far as nature and circumstances will allow him. He may, for example, knock down, maim, or stab, the first person he meets: he may dance, sing, lie down, stand on his head, or put himself into any position whatsoever, provided no common law of society control him. But if this be the case, he will find it to be most conducive to his own happiness to do no such things; which will, perhaps, be a motive sufficiently potent to make a good member of society of him. But here, as before, innumerable cases (usually termed cases of conscience) may occur, in which it may be extremely difficult to say what it is best to do. In such, analogy is the safest guide, and this involves an operation of reason; and therefore, where the line of duty is clear, the prudent man will not hesitate to submit; where it is not so, the safe side, if this be apparent, must be taken: but where no such thing is discernible, the Will alone must determine what is to be done; and, indeed, from the moment prudence suggests caution, reason, where it has materials to work upon, can alone be relied on in directing the conduct of the individual.

It may now be asked: How do the doctrines of our Scrip-

ture fall in with these properties of the human mind? I answer: In the most suitable way possible. The judgment, which must control the will, is called upon in the most forcible manner, and urged to determine on a question the most momentous. The person appealing is no less than the Author of our nature, and our future Judge; and the appeal is made in terms the most rational, kind, and affectionate. On a question so far exceeding human powers, instruction the best adapted to the case is proposed; and, what is most remarkable, while this professes to come from a world of spirits, and is, what it professes to be, clearly beyond the human intellect to fabricate, it, nevertheless, introduces nothing beyond our faculties to comprehend (as far as comprehension is necessary), or our natural powers to accept. What it recommends too, may be shewn, not only to be the most advantageous to us as men, but, what must stamp an incalculable value upon it, it has never been found to fail in its application to practice. Like the best philosophy, its truth in theory has been confirmed by experiment, and this through a period of nearly six thousand years. Of the external evidences for its truth I will now say no more, than that they are scarcely short of miraculous. No other book can cite in its favour the testimony of both friends and foes, nor can any be found receiving so much confirmation from the sciences both of ancient and modern times. Its morality is not only good, but authoritative: its promises and threats are not merely probable, but certain. Its property is to impart the most useful knowledge in the most effectual way; and to afford hope, consolation, safety, prosperity, health, and happiness, where every thing else has failed.

Now, I will ask, if such a document be placed before a being possessed with the powers of volition and of reason, such as man confessedly is, What must be his situation? Is he, as a rational being, at liberty to withhold his assent and obedience to the requirements of such a book? I think not; but that he is bound to submit. But if he choose (and this he may do, no violent restraint being laid upon his will) to withhold both assent and obedience, this will be done at his peril. Like the fool or the madman, he may in any case rush on his own ruin; and eminently so in this. To expect to be restrained from the possibility of error in the matter of

religion,* would be to expect something unlike the phenomena of both the natural and moral world, and manifestly repugnant to the question of fact. To wait, therefore, for impulses great and overpowering, such as indeed our Scriptures no where promise, but which are held out only by a philosophy meagre and wretched in the extreme, must in every case tend to annihilate the beamings of hope, and to reduce faith to a mere phantom. The dreary wilderness through which the pilgrim has to wind his way, with a light, strong indeed, and steady in its horizon, must, in such cases, increase in darkness and perplexity at every step. The rod and staff, which, under other circumstances, might have proved a permanent means of comfort and of support, will now become those of the oppressor, heavy and insupportable; and that dawning of hope which was once wont to be the traveller's benison, now end only in despair and ruin. In the faithfulness, mercy, and compassions of a kind Creator, however, we have that which suits our capacities, such as they are, provides for our wants, and will stimulate our best endeavours. The penny afforded to the last labourer, while it forbids any to delay, holds out grounds of hope to the longest-lost prodigal: and the most wretched and destitute both in life and godliness can, with such encouragements before him, still aspire to the acquisition of the best robe, and to feast on the bounties of a forgiving and kind Parent: in these the energies of hope will meet him in every day's life, and the helps of grace make him more than a conqueror: earth present an arena whereon he can contend successfully for a crown, and heaven the kingdom where he shall for ever wear it.

SECTION X.

DIGRESSION, ON THE PERMANENCY OF THE MORAL LAW, IN REPLY TO A WORK BY THE REV. DR. WHATELY, IN WHICH SOME STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN THE TWO FOREGOING SECTIONS SEEM TO BE CONTROVERTED.

THE ablest writer, in modern times perhaps, who has contended that the abolition of the whole law of Moses is incul-

* This question is thus admirably touched by Arnobius: "*Vis ergo ista, non gratia, nec Dei liberalitas principis.*" Lib. ii. p. 85.

cated by St. Paul, is Dr. Whately, the present Principal of St. Alban's Hall at Oxford. No one, I am sure, will suspect for a moment, that Dr. Whately's Essay on this subject is intended or calculated in any way, according to the mind of its Author, to relax any moral duty inculcated in our Scriptures; on the contrary, it may be shewn from his own words, that the views which he contends for, would, as far as he can see, raise rather than lower the standard of Christian morality. Laying aside, therefore, every consideration of this kind, the only question which ought to be raised is, Whether Dr. Whately has or has not rightly understood the declarations of St. Paul on this important question? Because I am disposed to believe, that whatever the Scripture has laid down on this point, is not only binding, but is also the most suitable to man—the most likely to correct his errors, to provide for all his necessities, and finally, to secure to him those inestimable blessings which, as a revelation, it has to give.

From a very patient investigation of this subject, then, I cannot but express my dissent from Dr. Whately's view; and the following are my reasons. In the first place, I am of opinion that Dr. Whately has mistaken St. Paul's reasoning on the question of the Mosaic law. Dr. Whately's words are: "There are very many passages relative to the Mosaic law occurring in the writings of St. Paul (especially in the Epistle to the Romans, and in those to the Galatians and to the Hebrews), whose most obvious and simple interpretation, at least, would seem to imply the entire abolition of that law by the establishment of the Gospel. For instance, Rom. vii. 6. '*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we are held,*' (Essay V. p. 142). And, a little farther on: "which abrogation, it is contended, St. Paul plainly declares, without any limitation or exception—any distinction between *moral* and *ceremonial*, or *civil* precepts." Again in page 144: "It cannot be denied that he (St. Paul) does speak frequently and strongly of the termination of the Mosaic law, and of the exemption of Christians from its obligations, without ever limiting and qualifying the assertion—without even hinting at a distinction between one part which is abrogated, and another which remains in full force. It cannot be said," it is added, "that he had in his mind the

ceremonial law alone, and was alluding merely to the *abolition* of that," &c. These passages contain, I think, a full statement of Dr. Whately's views on this subject. I will now proceed to consider them.

It is very true, St. Paul does not state particularly which part of the Mosaic law is *moral*, *ceremonial*, or *civil*; this has been done by divines, and apparently for the sake of convenience. Nor does St. Paul say what part of the moral law is now to be considered as abrogated, and what to be retained. In these points we shall have no question. But that St. Paul does *plainly declare the abrogation* of the Mosaic law, either with or without limitation, any where in the New Testament, is what I doubt; and is, I think, what Dr. Whately has not yet proved. It is true, the Apostle tells us distinctly that, "*now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we are (were) held.*" But, in order fully to understand this, it is necessary to consider the scope of his argument, of which this passage, and, indeed, the whole of the chapter from which it has been taken, is only a part.

The main question I think here discussed by the Apostle is, How is a man to be justified with God; and particularly one who has received and acknowledged the authority of the law? (I purposely omit the word *Mosaic*, because it is unnecessary, and would only encumber our question at present.) His conclusion is, "*A man is justified by faith without (χωρίς apart from) the deeds of the law.*" (Chap. iii. 28.) This is a general conclusion. At chap. iv. he takes up the question relative to the Jews; and the conclusion drawn at verses 22, 23, and 24 of the same chapter is, "*And therefore it (faith) was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*" &c. The next chapter commences with, "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" In the seventh chapter the liberation of the believer from the law (or rather the *curse* of the law) is discussed, and the conclusion is contained in the first verse of the following chapter: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" The Apostle then adds, by way of com-

ment, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*" From these passages I think we may fairly infer, that all the Apostle could mean was, That justification could not be obtained by any efforts made under the *moral law* ; for I believe, with Dr. Whately, that he does expressly exclude the *moral law* throughout this argument ; and secondly, that this blessing could be obtained only by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus.

Nothing, perhaps, is more certain, than that the great error prevalent among the Jews, during the times of the prophets, as well as in those of our Lord, was, a belief that a compliance with the letter of the law was all that could be required. Against this were they constantly admonished by the prophets, and against the same mistake was our Lord's sermon on the mount mainly directed. In this very epistle, St. Paul affirms that "*the letter killeth,*" and that "*by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified.*" In support of this, he cites the history of Abraham, and shews, that whatever he may have had to boast of as to his works, his justification was secured purely by his faith. To be delivered, then, or freed from the law, must here mean, to be delivered not from the *obligations* of the law, but from the *curse or condemnation* which it finally pronounced upon all flesh : and this the Apostle himself affirms in his Epistle to the Galatians (chap. iii. 10), "*For as many as are of the works of the law (i. e. have no other means of salvation) are under the curse.*" Then at the 13th and 14th verses, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*"... "*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,*" &c. And, what is still more direct, the conclusion drawn by the Apostle himself, on the very chapter from which Dr. Whately's extract is made, is, as it has already been remarked, "*There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus For the law of the Spirit of life (i. e. of faith) hath made me free from the law of sin and death :*" that is,—from the law convicting him of sin, and condemning him to death accordingly ; which he had previously shewn to be the constant result of the single operation of the law.

Now, I ask, Will it follow, that because the law is not

good in *one* sense (for in one sense only does the Apostle exclude it in this argument, and, I think, in every other that can be adduced), that it is not good in any? I am sure Dr. Whately will never make any such assertion; and for the best of all reasons, because St. Paul himself has plainly and directly affirmed the contrary, which, however, Dr. Whately has not noticed. "*Wherefore,*" says he (only six verses below Dr. Whately's citation) "*the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual.*" We find St. Paul here affirming, then, that the law is *holy, just, good, spiritual*: not for the purpose, indeed, of justifying any man from the imputation of sin, but, on the contrary, of convicting him. Let us now see what he expressly states as to its abolition or not. In chap. iii. 28, he says, "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without (χωρίς) the deeds of the law.*" This, according to the author of the "*Essays,*" ought to be reckoned among the passages which *plainly speak* of the abolition of the law. But how is it followed by St. Paul? With two verses only intervening, it is asked, "*Do we then MAKE VOID THE LAW through faith? God forbid: yea, we ESTABLISH THE LAW.*" That Dr. Whately cannot offer some explanation of this and the other passages above cited, conformable with his own views generally, I have no doubt; but I regret that such has not been given in the "*Essays;*" and I am disposed to believe, that none can be, approaching in any degree to probability, much less carrying conviction with them.

A difficulty may still remain, which is this: If St. Paul says that a man is justified *without* the works of the law, in what sense, it may be asked, is this word *without* to be understood? My answer is: I believe the word *χωρίς*, here rendered *without*, rather signifies *separate from, apart from, independently of, having no connexion with*, or the like; implying, that the law has nothing to do in the article of procuring pardon for the sinner, but another and a very different issue; as already intimated. Let us now briefly inquire,

whether any other part of the New Testament speaks a different language.

Our Lord says, (Matt. v. 17, &c.) “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of THESE LEAST COMMANDMENTS, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven,*” &c. If it be said, A part of the law, namely, the ceremonial, certainly was abolished by the Gospel dispensation, and that hence arises a probability that it was all abolished, because our Lord, like St. Paul, makes no distinction, I answer: The *types and shadows* which constituted the ceremonial law, were not only superseded by the advent of the substance, in the person of our Lord, but the Apostles have expressly taught us, that these cannot profit, and that the end of these is Christ. This subject has been separately and distinctly discussed in the Epistle to the Hebrews: it was also made the subject of prophecy, and clearly foretold by Daniel; from whom we learn, that the sacrifice and the oblation was to cease; and, what is still more decisive, that circumstances should be such, that the principal parts of these ceremonies could not be persevered in, because the sanctuary itself should be levelled with the ground. But, in the case of the moral law, we find no such intimation in any part of the Scripture; nor any such impossibility in the nature of things: besides, we find not only our Lord, but his Apostles, from first to last, both arguing for the precepts of the law, and, what is more important, grounding their addresses upon its authority, and actually citing its very words. Take the following as specimens. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xxi. 21—24, that a general accusation had been made against Paul of his having opposed the law; “*They are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, That they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.*” Then the performance of a vow which Paul had made, is recommended by the Apostles; and it is added, “*that . . . all may know that those things whereof they were*

informed concerning thee, are nothing ; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law." Whatever may be said as to the particulars of the vow and circumcision, the inefficacy of which we know St. Paul has inculcated, the intention here is, openly to confront and refute the general reports, that he had *opposed the law of Moses*. Now, how does Paul conduct himself in his several defences which happened after this? At chap. xxiii. verse 5, he manifestly cites the law as his rule of life. "*Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*" In the next place, he professes himself to be a Pharisee (of the strictest sect of those who kept the law, not of those who blindly abused it); and, at the 11th verse, the approbation of our Lord on his conduct is mentioned.

In his second defence, moreover, we find this remarkable passage, which (xxiv. 14) he pronounced in the presence of the high Priest himself: "*But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets . . . And HEREIN DO I EXERCISE MYSELF, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.*" That St. Paul differed in some respects from the Jews, as to the scope of the law and the prophets, there can be no doubt; but the validity of both he here expressly declares, and that he exercises himself constantly in observing them. In his third defence, chap. xxv. 8, his statement is this: "*Neither against THE LAW of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all;*"—a declaration plainly upholding the authority of the law. In the fourth defence, chap. xxvi. 5, &c., he openly professes himself to be a Pharisee. . . . "*Know all the Jews . . . that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee;*" (and verse 22), "*saying none other things than those which the prophets and MOSES DID SAY should come,*" &c. And, again, when he comes to Rome, he says to the Jews . . . (xxviii. 17) "*I have committed nothing against the people, or CUSTOMS OF OUR FATHERS, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.*" In verse 23 of the same chapter, it is said,—"*he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the LAW OF MOSES, and out of the prophets, from morning till*

evening." From all which, I believe, is most fairly to be inferred, not that St. Paul's intention was in any degree to diminish the authority of the law, but the contrary; to shew, that ON the law and the prophets he took his stand; and, from their declarations, shewed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ promised to the fathers. If it be said, that Paul found it expedient to allow the authority of the law for a season, in order to meet the prejudices of the Jews, I answer: There is not the least necessity or shadow of ground for such an assertion. Paul very well knew, that his life was in danger for bearing testimony to the mission of Jesus only; and that, if the Roman authority had not interposed, he should have lost it on this very occasion. What, therefore, had he to gain by concealing his real sentiments as to the authority or permanency of the law? Against the law, as justifying a man from sin, he expressly argued; against circumcision, as having any efficacy now, he boldly and unreservedly preached: and, although he allowed Timothy to be circumcised, and did himself perform a vow, yet nothing can be more certain, than that he held these things as fruitless,—never recommending, but constantly deprecating, their continuance and validity.

If then Paul did not *expressly abrogate* the law, but *constantly appealed* to it as having supreme authority, it may be asked, For what end has he applied it? I will not here take upon me to say, in what way he proved Jesus to be the Christ from the law (that he did this, we are expressly told), because this does not immediately concern its moral character, which is the question we have now before us; but, I think I may say, the Apostle's views, in this respect, may be easily ascertained from the manner in which he has spoken in the very chapter cited by Dr. Whately.

In order then fully to enter into the drift of the Apostle's arguments, it will be necessary to consider the character of the phraseology which he has introduced into his discourse. In the beginning of the preceding chapter, we are taught that believers are baptized into the death of Christ; that is,—by this act they have, by the grace of God, symbolically represented their own willingness to bid an eternal farewell to all the sins, and sinful dispositions, to which the natural man is subject; and, consequently, that they have

commenced, as it were, a new life; the end and object of which is, holiness, faith, and every good work, to be exercised in the love and fear of God. This, I think, is what is meant in the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the sixth chapter. From the 5th to the 11th verse, the same thing is taught by a different figure,—namely, by that of being crucified, and raised from the dead, with Christ.

Let us now proceed to the seventh chapter. Here, then, the subject is taken up, and the believer represented as freed from the law, by being considered *a dead man*; just as a wife is delivered from the covenant of marriage, when the husband is dead; and the conclusion is,—“*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when,*” he adds, “*we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*”

I suppose it will be granted, that “the motions of sins” (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) here mentioned, cannot mean any excitement to sin created by the operation of the law, but, rather, the sense of sin superinduced by its declarations: and if so, the bringing forth fruit unto death must also mean, the conviction that we were doing so; or, in other words, that the end of these things was death: because, as the law could not propose any thing in the shape of pardon, its constant effect must have been, to keep the sinner who had once transgressed, under the sentence of unprofitableness and condemnation.* The Apostle then adds, “*We are now delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held;*” i. e. as I understand it,—the law, as a system introducing inevitable condemnation, has lost its force; from this, Christ has, by his Gospel, graciously delivered us, having been made a curse for

* So Irenæus. “Veniens autem lex . . . et testificans de peccato, quoniam peccator est (i. e. homo), regnum quidem ejus abstulit, latronem et non regem eum detegens, et homicidam eum ostendit; oneravit autem hominem, qui habebat peccatum in se, reum mortis ostendens eum. *Spiritualis enim quum lex esset, manifestavit tantummodo peccatum, non autem interemit.*” Lib. iii. cap. 18.

us : so that we can NOW SERVE, not under the letter, which condemned invariably, but under the spirit, of the law, the end of which was to give glory to God, by bringing convinced sinners for salvation to the cross of Christ : we *serve*, therefore, in the *newness of the Spirit*, and thus bear fruit to God ; “so,” says our Lord, “shall ye be my disciples.” (John, xv. 8.) An objection will probably here be taken to the manner, in which I have treated the figures above alluded to ; for, as the man, it will perhaps be said, who has died with Christ, and who has been buried with him, no less than the woman, whose husband is said to be dead, must be freed in every point of view from all previous restraints or contracts ; so must the believer, if the parallel hold good, be entirely freed from all the enactments of the Mosaic law. My answer is : If St. Paul had said nothing more on this subject,—had afforded nothing in the shape of comment on his own words,—or, if he had universally expressed himself in a manner confirmatory of such an opinion,—then there could have remained no doubt that such was his intention. But, if he has otherwise expressed himself, and in a manner plainly indicating, that this was not his intention ; then I think it is our duty to inquire, what he could have meant by those figures, and not to trust to the mere doctrines of parallelism. My own belief is, that he only intended to inculcate this,—viz., that believers are now as completely freed from the *condemnatory* clauses of the law, as the supposed woman would be, from the disabilities contained in a former marriage-contract, upon her making another, supposing the former husband to be really dead. My reasons are these : We are asked, at the 7th verse,—“*What shall we say then ? Is the law sin ? God forbid.*” Then, at the 12th, after shewing the office of the law, the Apostle concludes, as already cited,—“*Wherefore the LAW is holy ; and the COMMANDMENT holy, and just, and good.*” And, at the 14th,—“*For we know that the law is SPIRITUAL.*” And, lastly, at the 25th verse,—“*So, then, with the mind I MYSELF SERVE THE LAW OF GOD.*” Nothing, I believe, can be more clear, than that it is the Apostle’s intention, in the first three of these passages, to guard against a misinterpretation of his context ; and to shew, that although he argues against the validity of the law in one respect, he does not against its authority in all ; to inculcate,

that the law is not inefficacious considered in itself, but in its application to fallen, imperfect, sinful, and shortsighted beings, such as we are : and further, to instruct his Christian converts, that there was no other means of instruction accessible to them (just as it had been the case with himself), whereby their wretched and lost estate could be ascertained, and thence met by the richer provisions of grace. Then, at the 24th and 25th verses, after shortly recapitulating his former assertions, he thanks God that there is a remedy to be found in the meritorious atonement of Christ ; and adds, in order to cut off every possibility of mistake,—“ *So, then, with the mind I myself serve the LAW of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin :*” which I would thus paraphrase,—Subdued as I am by the sense of my utter unworthiness, which is the just sentence of the law ; I, nevertheless, do both rejoice in the law of God (v. 22), and strive wholly to obey it. Fail I do, and shall ; but thanks be to God, he has provided for this in the atonement of my Redeemer ; or, as St. John has put it : “ *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*”

If any thing further were wanting to complete this proof, the first three verses of the following chapter, which are perfectly in point, may be adduced ; and to these the fourth may be added, as confirmatory of our duty to obey the law : “ *That the righteousness of THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit :*” where it is impossible to have recourse to the doctrine of imputation, because the WALK, or LIFE, of the believer is expressly mentioned.

Let us now briefly notice the manner in which St. Paul treats this question in his Epistle to the Galatians. If we begin at the 12th verse of the third chapter, we shall find him affirming, that “ *the law is not of faith ; but the man that doeth them shall live in them*” (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως) ; i. e. as I understand it,—it is no part of it, it has nothing whatever to do with it ; but is a different system, proposing eternal life to a sinless obedience, but to nothing short of that. And at the 18th verse, it is said,—“ *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise ; but God gave it to Abraham by*

promise." The inheritance of God's kingdom, and its blessings, therefore, are obtained by promise; not by the law, which was rather intended to instruct in duties, and to annex punishments to disobedience.

The next important question is: "*Wherefore then SERVETH the law?*" or, more literally, What then is the law? (τί οὖν (ἐστίν) ὁ νόμος; not τί οὖν ἦν πότε ὁ νόμος; not, What was the law once, or, For what purpose had it then only authority?) The Apostle himself answers: "*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made:*" that is, the law was given for purely moral purposes, until the seed should come, respecting whom the promises had been made; being ordained, set up, or arranged, by angels, through a mediator (Moses). See Exod. iii. 2; xix. 20, &c.

I must here warn the reader against supposing, that the word *till* (ἄχρις οὖν) necessarily implies, that the authority of the law should terminate when this promised seed should appear; nothing being more certain, than that the oriental, or Hebrew, usage of this particle, necessarily implies no such thing. (See Noldius's Concordance of Hebrew Particles, edit. 1734, p. 534, Nota, &c.) We may conclude, then, I think, that this particle will not avail in determining our question here.

Let us now proceed to the 21st verse. "*Is the law then against the promises?*" asks the Apostle; and his answer is, "*God forbid.*" By which he seems to imply, that there is no impossibility in the law and promises standing together; and, what is still more remarkable, he adds, "*For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law;*" *i. e.*, had it been possible for man to be saved by the law (which, however, it is not), then would the justification of the sinner have been obtained by that means, and no other would probably have been offered. But the truth is, as intimated in the next verse, the Scripture,—*i. e.* the written law,—has positively condemned all; and, for this end, that they may be driven to avail themselves of the benefits of the promise, by faith in Christ Jesus. To this end, therefore, serveth the law.

Again, at verse 23: "*Before faith (i. e. the object of faith) came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith*

which should afterwards be revealed;" i. e. we, who were Jews, were, during the times of the promise, kept under the law, and taught to look to the promise, by faith of the Redeemer to come.* (Moses himself having prophesied of his appearance.) But, now (v. 25) that the object of faith is come, we are no longer in that situation: we are not now under a system of types and shadows combined with moral precepts: Christ himself has been openly crucified among us; and thus has the one been superseded, and the other disarmed. The law is no longer our only teacher with regard to him, or our judge independent of him. In these respects, then, we have obtained liberation and additional light. The law, too, is now set on a nobler basis; it is,—as it ought ever to have been considered,—the regulator of the mind, of the affections,—the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and not only of the actions, as the Jews had erroneously supposed.

This sort of pupilage is evidently pointed out in the third verse of the 4th chapter. "*Even so we,*" it is said, "*when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*" And the new state, at verse 7: "*Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*" In verse 9, they are warned against returning to the weak and beggarly elements; which, at verse 10, is explained to signify ceremonial observances: "*Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.*" At the 21st verse, their desire to be thus placed under the law is reproved; and we are there informed, that this consisted in taking the commandment, to the exclusion of the promise: the common error argued against, almost throughout the Epistle to the Romans; and with this subject the chapter ends.

The first four verses of the next chapter go plainly to shew the inefficacy of legal observances, now that the end of

* Irenæus, lib. iv. cap. 43. "Cum autem venerit tempus, et evenierit quod prophetatum est, tunc prophetiæ habent liquidam et certam expositionem . . . Non enim habent expositionem omnium rerum pertinentem ad adventum Filii Dei, qui est secundum hominem: à Christianis verò cum legitur, thesaurus est absconsus in agro, cruce verò Christi revelatus est, et explanatus, et ditans sensum hominum, et ostendens sapientiam Dei, et eas quæ sunt erga hominem dispositiones ejus manifestans, et Christi regnum præformans, et hereditatem sanctæ Hierusalem præevangelizans, et prænuntians," &c.

the law had been manifested : and, accordingly, justification by faith alone is inculcated, at verse 5. At verse 14, we are told, “ *All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this ; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” This is just what our Lord had formerly taught the disciples : nor can there be the least doubt, his intention was to embody in a few words the great scope of the moral law ; but not to enact a new one.* Then, at the 18th verse, it is said, “ *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law,*”—i. e. under its curse.

From what has been said, I think we may conclude, that no intimation whatever has escaped the lips of Paul, as to the abrogation of the moral law ; but, on the contrary, an openly professed and acknowledged attachment to it, allowing it at once to be that in which he exercised himself, and had done so even from his childhood ; and affirming, that it was the joy of his heart, just, holy, good, and spiritual. That any flesh, such as it is, could be justified by the law, however, he positively denies ; and, that the ceremonies had any efficacy, now that their antitype had appeared, he just as positively denies ; arguing that faith in the Son of God, or,—which is the same thing,—in the promised seed, was the

* The reasoning of Irenæus (lib. iv. cap. 27. adversus Hæreses) is so much in point on this subject, that I cannot forbear transcribing a considerable part of it :—“ *Et quia Dominus,*” inquit ille, “ *naturalia legis, per quæ homo justificatur, quæ etiam ante legislationem custodiebant, qui fide justificabantur, et placebant Deo, non dissolvit, sed extendit, sed et implevit, ex sermonibus ejus ostenditur. Dictum est enim, inquit, antiquis, Non machaberis. Ego autem dico vobis, Quoniam omnis qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam machatus est eam in corde suo. Et iterum, &c. . . . Omnia enim hæc non contrarietatem et dissolutionem præteritorum continent, sicut qui à Marcione sunt vociferantur ; sed plenitudinem et extensionem.*” And again : “ *Hæc autem non quasi contraria legi docebat, sed adimplens legem, et infigens justificationes legis in nobis . . . Et hoc autem quod præcepit, non solum vetitis à lege, sed etiam à concupiscentiis eorum abstinere, non contrarium est, quemadmodum prædiximus ; neque solventis legem, sed adimplentis, et extendentis, et dilatantis. Etenim lex, quippe servis posita, per ea quæ foris erant corporalia, ANIMAM ERUDIEBAT, velut per vinculum attrahens EAM ad obedientiam præceptorum . . . Hæc autem omnia, quemadmodum prædiximus, non DISSOLVENTIS ERANT LEGEM, sed ADIMPLENTIS, et EXTENDENTIS, et DILATANTIS in nobis. . . Quia igitur naturalia omnia præcepta communia sunt nobis et illis, in illis quidem initium et ortum habuerunt, in nobis augmentum et adimplentionem perceperunt.*” (Edit. 1570, pp. 252, 3 ; Grabbe’s edit. pp. 314, 15.) See some admirable remarks on this subject by Eusebius, Demonst. Evang. lib. i. cap. 6.

only means whereby a man could be justified from his transgressions; and this he affirms has now been laid open to all men. Innumerable other passages may be cited to the same effect; but, as there can be no necessity to do so, we now leave this part of our subject.

Dr. Whately endeavours to shew, in the sequel of his Essay, that his view of the question will not tend to relax Christian morality; because, as he argues, morality, as such, is of universal obligation, and independent of all enactment. His words are: "To say, therefore, that no part of the Jewish law is binding on Christians, is very far from leaving them at liberty to disregard all moral duties; for, in fact, the very definition of a *moral duty implies* its universal obligation, independent of all *enactment*."* p. 148. I will merely remark on this statement, that however promising it may appear, it will be found to be defective in two points of view at least, and those two fatal ones, as to the effects likely to be produced on society. First, it takes for granted, that all moral duties either are known, or may be discovered, independent of the revealed moral law; which I deny. A few, — the infraction of which are punishable by the statute laws

* Again, in page 147: "For it is evident that the natural distinctions of right and wrong, which *conscience points out*, must remain where they were. These distinctions," adds he, "not having been introduced by the Mosaic law, cannot, it is evident, be overthrown by its removal, any more than the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem implied the destruction of the Mount Sion, whereon it was built." And a little lower down, St. Paul himself is cited as saying, "The Gentiles, which have not the law," being capable of "*doing by nature* the things contained in the law . . . their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing one another;" and of their knowing (in cases where they committed sin) "that they who do such things are worthy of death." I would not be understood as controverting this statement in every point of view; for it is well known, that the very existence of civil society will teach the necessity of abstaining from the performance of certain actions, and that it is good and honourable to persevere in others: and this, I suppose, is what St. Paul means, when he speaks of the Gentiles. They knew, no doubt, enough of moral right and wrong to enable them to accuse and excuse one another; and, perhaps, to believe that in their best estate they were in reality far worse than they ought to have been. Yet, from what St. Paul also says of them, it is quite clear, that the little knowledge they had, had scarcely any influence over their conduct; and, as to the honour due to God, they as a body had entirely given it up: See chap. i. from verse 20 to the end. This, I think, is a fair specimen of what natural conscience and reason is likely

of the realm,—all who have any thing to lose will subscribe to and support; while, on the other hand, many, who have every thing to gain, will, notwithstanding all the philosophy and philanthropy ever preached about, deny the validity even of these: and the practical consequence will be, as it formerly was among the heathen, there will be no want of lawmakers, but a universal dearth of obedient subjects. Experience seems to say, all will profess to be in possession of the truth, which all will as positively deny to be in that of his neighbour. In the second place, all such laws, or rules, however good or bad, will necessarily be destitute of authority. Doubtful or questionable rewards and punishments (and these will go no further), will have but little effect in controlling the impetuosity of passion, or in stimulating into action the torpor of idleness, poverty, or wretchedness. One, perhaps, in a hundred millions, may, like Socrates, be found hardy enough to stem popular error and prejudice; while, like him, he may, nevertheless, give in to many vices which would put the most ignorant Christian to the blush.

Dr. Whately's appeal to reason in questions of this kind, is, in my opinion, quite beside the point (p. 149): he argues very justly, that it will depend upon the human judgment to sever the moral from the ceremonial part of the law of Moses: he then concludes, "So far, consequently, from the moral precepts of the moral law being to the Christian necessary to determine *what* is right and wrong; on the contrary, this moral judgment is necessary to determine what *are* the *moral* precepts of Moses," which is in my judgment a fallacy. Suppose, for example, I have two MS. copies of Herodotus before me, out of which I am required to form as pure a text as I can. How ought I to proceed in this case? I ought, of necessity, to exercise my judgment; and, with this, in con-

always to come to. This will not, indeed, alter the nature of truth, or the obligation to follow it, as the author of the Essays truly observes: but I think it will shew us, that however indisputable this may be, the practical result will be any thing but that which he anticipates. The distinction made a little lower down (p. 148), that a precept's being *moral* gives it its obligatory power, rather than its being *commanded*, is, whatever else it may be, certainly in opposition to the sentiments of Scripture, which teach us, that *obedience* is better than sacrifice; and then exhort us to follow the examples of Abraham and Paul, who believed and obeyed. (Heb. xi. Gal. i.)

junction with all the information I can obtain from every other quarter, to form as correct an exemplar as I am able; and after all, it is probable my copy will be far from perfect. Now, I ask, allowing that my moral judgment may carry me thus far, will it enable me to fabricate out of my own mind a complete copy of such work, *i. e.* to put down the facts, &c. in their just and true order, without the assistance of any such copies? In like manner, I may be able to publish the best edition of Newton's Principia, and even to correct a few mistakes made by its author; but will it hence follow, that, without ever seeing this work, I should also have been able to discover the whole just as he did? So, in separating the moral from the ceremonial part of the law of Moses, I may succeed to a great degree, as far, perhaps, as it may be necessary; but this is a thing widely different from being able to say, that I can discover and lay down all that is necessary for the conduct of mankind under all circumstances, and to sanction this with the promise of certain rewards or inevitable punishments. This is, I maintain, beyond the power of man to do, while the other is not. Human reason is, indeed, good in its place; but take it out of its proper element, the service of its proper parent, and it becomes the organ of folly, and the originator of error.

When Dr. Whately says, that a moral truth found in the Koran or the laws of Solon, is just as binding on Christians if determined to be such by the nature of the case, as any moral truth found elsewhere can be, I would answer: True: if Scripture inculcates such laws as may be found in those writings, then they will be binding; because, when we know that they inculcate what God has inculcated, we can have no doubt of their utility or their validity; not because we may suppose them to be good, but because he who gave them knew them to be so; and on this account only can we allow them to be authoritative. And I may, perhaps, affirm, that the darkness as to moral truth, which characterised the times of Solon, as well as that which marks the present state of the Mohammedan world, is more than sufficient to shew, that human reason has not powers adequate to legislate on subjects of this sort to any considerable extent.

In page 151, Dr. Whately says: "Indeed, the very law

itself indicates, on the face of it, that the whole of its precepts were intended for the Israelites exclusively (on which supposition," adds he "they cannot of course be binding on Christians), not only from the intermixture of civil and ceremonial precepts with moral, but from the very terms in which even they were delivered." In proof of this he adduces the first and the fifth commandments. With reference to the first, I must say: I do not see any thing, particularly restricting it to the Jews as a nation. God's having brought *them out of the land of Egypt*, does, indeed, refer to a particular benefit which they had received; but, I believe, that His power and goodness is principally had in view in this declaration, and, in this sense, it cannot be said to be inapplicable to us. But with reference to the fifth, St. Paul himself has cited it in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Children," says he, "obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. *Honour thy father and mother*, which is the first commandment with promise; *that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.*" (chap. vi. 1—3.) Where it is remarkable, St. Paul appeals to this commandment as still in force, and urges the promise which it contains, as applicable to the Christians of his day; and surely it is reasonable to infer, that it is also applicable to those of all succeeding ages. Besides, if the Apostle declares that this commandment is *right*, let it be remembered, he appeals to the law of Moses for his proof; and not to the decisions of human reason, or the human conscience. In these particular instances, therefore, I think Dr. Whately's views cannot be borne out.

The author of the Essays proceeds: "If men are taught to regard the Mosaic law (with the exception of the civil and ceremonial ordinances) as their appointed rule of life, they will be disposed to lower the standard of Christian morality, by *contenting themselves with a literal adherence to the express commands of the law.*" (p. 156.) I must confess I very much doubt the soundness of this inference. If, indeed, Christians take the erroneous view of the law, which we find from the declarations of the prophets, of our Lord, and of the Apostles, the Jews did, there can be no doubt Dr. Whately's opinion will be the true one. But, I would ask, Is there any probability, or even danger, that this will be the case, when

the reproofs of the prophets, the discourses of our Lord, and the writings of the Apostles, are attended to; all of which most plainly and positively assure us, that the law extends even to the thoughts and intents of the heart? * Dr. Whately seems to understand the law as applying only to certain cases, and in these demanding only the bare performance of the actions enjoined, or a forbearance from those which are forbidden. But what says our Lord? (Matt. v. 28.) "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." That is, he is already guilty of an infraction of the law. And speaking of the sixth commandment, he mentions unjust anger as involving the danger of eternal condemnation; which St. John also takes up and explains in the same manner. (1 John, iii. 15.) Our Lord's celebrated abridgment of the law and prophets into two short precepts, very clearly shews, that the *animus* or mind, in which the law is to be understood, is the main point to be had in view; and this in St. Paul's language is termed its *spirituality*.

* And the same was manifestly the case under the old dispensation. In Deut. vi. 5, 6, we have, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL THINE HEART, and with ALL THY SOUL, and with ALL THY MIGHT. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be IN THY HEART." Then in Isaiah, li. 7. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in WHOSE HEART is my law." And again, with reference to the manner in which the fasts and Sabbaths ought to be kept, Is. lviii. 6, &c. "Is not this the fast which I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke, &c. . . . If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity," &c. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable," &c. From which it must clearly appear, that to conform merely with the letter, was not considered sufficient; but that an entire compliance with the *spirit* of the law was also demanded. That this was not done generally by the Jews, I think there can be no question; yet the prophets persevered in telling them, that not only it ought to be done, but that a time would come in which it should be done. Jer. xxxi. 33. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put *my law* in their inward parts, and write IT IN THEIR HEARTS;" which we find cited in Heb. viii. 10, x. 16, where I contend, the LAW mentioned must be THE REVEALED LAW, there being no other. In these places, indeed, the covenant is spoken of as being NEW; but that it cannot be considered NEW in the sense of originating with the times of the Gospel dispensation, St. Paul's arguments with the Jews may be cited to shew.

Dr. Whately seems to me to have lost sight of a consideration which ought never to be lost sight of in questions of this nature, namely, the impossibility there is of forming any code of precepts, such as to include every possible case that may occur. The usage has always been, to make the precepts as few and comprehensive as possible; and in this point of view, I believe, nothing has ever been framed with so much consummate wisdom, as the ten commandments of the moral law. The codes of national laws occasionally become so voluminous, we know, as to be remembered and cited with the greatest difficulty, and this is the case with our own; and yet none have hitherto appeared which have provided for every case; because the thing is manifestly impossible. Their spirit and drift is principally to be regarded; and this is precisely what is taught in the New Testament, respecting the moral law of Moses. Our divines, too, have generally proceeded on these grounds in writing on the commandments; and, for my own part, I have no doubt the view they took was the just one. In the same manner must the precepts delivered by our Lord and his Apostles be explained (for precepts they have laid down, whatever Dr. Whately may think to the contrary); which, I believe, will for the most part be found, either to be citations from some part or other of the Old Testament, or comments authoritatively given upon it.

The Gospel principles of morality, mentioned by Dr. Whately, can be nothing more than the just application of those moral precepts, which we find written either in the Old or New Testament, and which are in some places spoken of as being the law of God written on the heart, *i. e.* are applied not according to the letter merely, but according to their genuine spirit, to the conscience of the Christian. But suppose we grant the utmost that Dr. Whately can ask for, and allow that Christian principles or dispositions are mainly urged in the Gospel, what will our question now be? Will it not be to inquire, How these principles or dispositions are inculcated? The answer will then necessarily be: In the detail and application of moral precepts extended to the heart, and governing it in an entire submission to the authority of the divine Lawgiver; and in that equability and serenity which appears to have been termed by the Apostles, "*the peace of*

God." Dr. Whately seems to me to have allowed himself to be mistaken, when he urged the realisation of *principles* independent of any specific moral code. Principles, according to my notions, are nothing more or less than comprehensive laws, against which, the man who holds them, or who is commonly termed the *man of principle*, will not allow himself to sin : and whether these be written in a book, or understood by common consent, their nature is still the same ; they are still *laws*—and the only questions that can arise about them must be : Where they are to be found ; whether they are good ; and how they can be made generally binding.

I have said, that these laws, which constitute principles, must be written : I will now say, it is only by thus recording them, that they can be preserved from injury, or admixture with other matter. And I believe the laws or principles (for it signifies not by which name we style the moral precepts) recommended to believers, have always been registered for this very purpose ; tradition being too insecure a medium to preserve them. In the next place, they have been dictated by God himself. We may, therefore, rest assured, that they are both *good* and *binding*. In these respects, therefore, the moral law, as recorded in the Scripture, is complete ; it is *holy*, *just*, *good*, and *spiritual* : and the only point of view in which any defect can arise in its application, must be, as the Apostle has justly argued, from the weakness or infirmity of the flesh. But if we separate Christian principles or dispositions from the positive law of morality taught in the Scriptures, I must confess I can see no other result probable, than that a mind subject at best to mistake and error, would be elevated into the situation of a lawgiver, legislating to meet its own infirmities, and becoming authoritative only to be mischievous. My conclusion therefore is, that Dr. Whately's views on these subjects are not tenable.

SECTION XI.

ON THE PRIMITIVE, THE JEWISH, AND THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

THE last article I shall notice in Dr. Whately's " Essay " is, that given on the observance of the Sabbath. " I am

inclined," says he, (p. 163.) "to believe that one reason which makes some persons reluctant to acknowledge the total abolition of the Mosaic law, is the notion that the sanctity of the 'Christian Sabbath' depends on the fourth commandment; and that, consequently, the reverence due to the Lord's day would be destroyed or impaired by our admitting the ten commandments to be no longer binding." From what we have seen respecting the Mosaic law, I think there is reason to believe that it has never been abrogated. That part, indeed, which was typical, necessarily ceased with the offering up of the great Antitype: on the other part, which was moral, this event could exercise no such influence. A question, however, might arise, as to which part the institution of the Sabbath really belonged. The Westminster divines referred it to the moral; Dr. Whately believes that it belonged to the ceremonial law.* For my own part, I believe it partook, in certain respects, of both; and for these reasons: Many of the services performed on that day were doubtless ceremonial, viz. the sacrifices and many other things connected with the tabernacle or temple, as many passages might be cited to shew; but the rest enjoined upon the people, and the keeping of this day holy, for the purpose of reading the Scripture, prayer, and the like, whether carried on in the temple or elsewhere, were instituted for moral purposes; and, as far as I can see, were, in part at least, observed by the patriarchs from the very first. Dr. Whately, too, has no doubt that the patriarchs kept a sort of Sabbath. I believe the same thing; but I differ from him in supposing, that the Sabbath of the creation was not first recorded by Moses in allusion to a circumstance which happened two thousand years afterwards, namely, the institution of the Sabbath in the wilderness: because, I do not believe that Moses was the author of the book of Genesis. He may, indeed, have compiled it (and it is most probable he did); but, I have no doubt,

* Still, in its moral part, it appears to have admitted of a typical application, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iv. 4—10; where it seems to have intimated some future rest to the believers of those times. Again in Colossians, ii. 16, 17. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

those Scriptures are patriarchal, just as I believe the book of Job to be; for reasons which I shall presently give. If, then, the Sabbath, mentioned as instituted at the creation, was not first recorded by Moses, the probability will become strong, that a Sabbath day was kept before the law of Moses was given; and it will be equally probable, that this was the Sabbath kept by the patriarchs; and if this be the case, the abrogation or not of the Mosaic law will not interfere with this question.

Now, if the original Sabbath was kept by the patriarchs, there can be no impropriety in supposing that the Jews, through whose hands the patriarchal Scriptures have been delivered down, kept this Sabbath, if it can be shewn that they kept any, before the law had been given from Sinai. That the Jews kept a Sabbath day, before the law was given from Sinai, we are expressly told. "To-morrow," it is said, "is the rest of the *holy Sabbath unto the Lord*," (Exod. xvi. 23), at a period occurring a considerable time before the Israelites had come to Mount Sinai. I do not cite this, however, to shew that this was the Sabbath day of the patriarchs,—I believe it was not; but only to prove, that the Sabbath day was recognised before the law had been given by Moses. It may also be remarked, that the mention of the Sabbath does not appear to be introduced here as of a thing unknown up to that time; it is, on the contrary, spoken of as a thing generally well known; it is also said to be *the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*,—a circumstance of which the Israelites needed no other information, than that the day of its celebration was at hand. The terms likewise in which the declaration is couched, identify it with the primitive Sabbath; the *rest* and the *holiness* here mentioned being enjoined on that occasion, and on that occasion only, previous to this notice by Moses. It may be concluded, then, perhaps, that although the very day of the primitive institution of the Sabbath may not be here marked, the observance of that institution itself is.

Let us now endeavour to ascertain whether this declaration of Moses related to the day originally appointed for the observance of this Sabbath, or not? If we turn to the 12th chapter of Exodus, we shall find, that on the fourteenth day of the month, at even, the paschal lamb was to be slain,

and eaten in haste, with the loins girded, shoes on the feet, &c. (ver. 11); and again (ver. 14), that this day was to be kept (annually) in the same manner, throughout the generations of the Jews. A day was, therefore, here set apart, for the first time, for this particular act. We are told in the next verse (15), that seven days, apparently following this, are then to be kept in like manner; and, from the words in which this is stated, it should seem, that this feast should begin and end with a Sabbath day; and if so, we have here the observance of a whole week appointed, including a Sabbath day at each of its extremes. In verse 17, we are further told, that on this day (*i. e.* the first of these Sabbath days), the armies of Israel were brought out of Egypt, and on this account the appointment took place. This subject is again taken up in chap. xiii., where we are told (ver. 3), that “Moses said unto the people, *Remember THIS DAY*, in which ye came out from Egypt . . . for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no unleavened bread be eaten.” And at ver. 6, “Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread,” &c. which marks the whole week alluded to. Let it be observed, the particular day, its following week, and recurring Sabbath, are pointedly marked. In chap. xvi. 23, the rest of the *holy Sabbath*, as already noticed, is mentioned; and this Sabbath must have recurred, I presume, in conformity with the appointment just alluded to. I do not believe, however, that this Sabbath day happened on that appropriated for the observance of the patriarchs, for the following reasons:—

First, If this day was to recur in the order usually observed, it could scarcely have been necessary to admonish the Israelites that it should happen on the morrow; for this they must have known: a custom to which they had from their cradles been accustomed to look with delight and veneration, could not have been so far forgotten as to stand in need of such an admonition;* but, if a change in the

* It has sometimes been supposed, that the Israelites might in Egypt have either forgotten or disregarded their primitive Sabbath. I cannot see, myself, how this could have taken place: for, first, they resided together in the land of Goshen, in circumstances of great prosperity, which must have continued for a considerable time. During this period, therefore, they had every opportunity for keeping up public worship, and for observing all their

time of its observance had recently been made, such admonition must have been both seasonable and necessary; because they might otherwise have deferred collecting a double quantity of the manna till the day following, which would have been fatal.

In the next place, it seems scarcely credible that the Israelites would be put upon the march out of Egypt on the Sabbath day, which must have been the case had the paschal lamb been slaughtered and eaten on its commencement. God himself had sanctified the Sabbath day from the beginning; and, as the disposal of the whole affair of the egress rested with him, it does not seem probable that he would have set thus lightly upon his own institution, especially as we find our Lord commanding his disciples not to take their flight on the Sabbath day. It has indeed been advanced in reply to this, that upon the Israelites marching round Jericho, the Sabbath

religious customs. During the period of the persecution, which does not appear to have been a long one, it is less likely their religious customs would be either disregarded or forgotten, because persecution generally has a tendency to give these an efficacy and universality which they had not before. And this seems to have been the fact; for we are told, that it was in answer to their cries that the deliverance was undertaken. Besides, it is difficult to say, how Moses could have spoken so *familiarly* of the Sabbath as he did, if the institution itself had entirely been forgotten. For the manner, however, in which he has done this, we may now say, no good reason can perhaps be given, without supposing some alteration to have taken place in the day on which it was to be kept. In Exod. xvi. 23, we have, "This is that which THE LORD HATH SAID, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath," &c.; that is, This is what the Lord hath commanded now to be observed. But, I may ask, Why is the *morrow* here named, if only a reminiscence, not a command is intended to be urged? And, if the day had already been established and was well known, What necessity could there have been here for such command or reminiscence? Besides, if this has respect to the appointment made at the egress (and to no other can we here appeal), it must be to that on which the paschal lamb was offered; and to this as a Sabbath, and not as an annual appointment. The same command is repeated in ver. 25; and the repetition is probably made, in order to cut off every danger of mistake. But why these asseverations should have been made, had no change taken place, it is out of my power to see. It is worthy of remark, that in ver. 29 of this chapter, where we have, "The Lord hath given (or appointed) you the Sabbath," the Septuagint has, ὁ γὰρ Κύριος ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν σάββατα THN 'HMEPAN TAYTHN: and I cannot help thinking that such passages as, "the Lord hath given *you* his Sabbaths," must relate to a particular appointment with regard to the Jews, differing in some respects from the primitive one.

must have been thus profaned : which I think is not admissible ; because, on that occasion, no toilsome march like that of the egress was to be sustained,—no utensils, baggage, &c. to be packed up and carried for several miles : on the contrary, the people had only to walk round the city with the priests, in order to witness the miracle to be wrought for their advantage, and for the furtherance of God's own glory ; and, as this did not take place until the city had been encompassed seven several times ; it is highly probable that the carnage did not commence before the hours appointed for the observance of the Sabbath had passed. Whether the primitive Sabbath was kept once more after the egress, it is impossible to say with certainty ; but I believe not. Pharaoh must have been in the rear of the Israelites during a part of it, and in which it was impossible for them to rest. We find, too, that some of the particulars recommended in the new institution were actually complied with on the march ; for, at verse 39 of the 12th chapter, we are told that “ *they baked unleavened cakes :*” a reason indeed is assigned, “ *because they were thrust out of Egypt.*” It is remarkable enough, however, that this should have been mentioned by the historian, which, in any other point of view, must appear trivial at least.

It may be replied, that the mention of the *day* alluded to might only be intended to mark the annual recurrence of the first day of the paschal week.* I answer : To this I have nothing to object ; but, as it also involves the recurrence of a whole week, it must also limit the commencement of the Sabbath day then observed, to the evening of the passover : a period which could hardly have commenced the primitive Sabbath, for the reason just given. If it be replied, that after all this would have been to profane the first Sabbath so

* There is a remarkable feature in the religious observances mentioned in the Bible, which may properly be noticed here. Time seems to have been divided into several analogous periods. The six days' work of creation closes with the seventh day ; and this is ever after to be observed in a similar manner by man, and on the same recurring days ; the first of which commences the week, the year, &c. When we come down to the times of Moses, the day of the egress is fixed upon, as the period to be dated from, in future, by the Jews, which seems to be their peculiarity ; from this, the week, the year, the Sabbatical year, the jubilee, and all other religious transactions, are to be dated. On every one of these occasions the lamb is slain, in token of

instituted, I answer? By no means; this was not a Sabbath; it only marked the day afterwards to be observed as the Sabbath.

According to this view of the subject, then, the primitive Sabbath was not abrogated, but only the day of its observance changed. That a new period for reckoning the commencement of the year was established on this occasion, there has been no doubt; and that the same was fixed upon for the commencement and close of the week is, I affirm, equally probable: and, if so, the sixth, and not the seventh, day of the patriarchal week, has since that time been kept sacred by the Jews, as will presently appear.

Let us now examine a few passages, in which the mention of the Sabbath occurs. In Exodus, xx. 11, the commandment is enforced purely with regard to the primitive institution of the Sabbath; whence I am led to suppose, that we have here the primitive form of the commandment. But in Deut. v. 15, the reason assigned is, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence . . . therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day:" that is, as I understand it: The Lord thy God sanctified the Sabbath day, in primitive times, because he rested on that day, and, therefore, he made it a day of holy rest for all; but, because he brought thee out of Egypt, he appointed a peculiar observance of it to thee, and then named a day to be remembered throughout thy generations. In Exodus, xxxi. 13, 17, the Sabbaths are said to be appointed for *signs* between God and the Jews; and to these places reference is made, in the same sense, by Ezekiel (chap. xx. 12, 20, &c.) The Jews alone, it should be remembered, received the benefits of this wonderful deliverance: on the day of its occurrence, the period of the Sabbath afterwards

the redemption from Egypt, and typical of the great and final redemption to be made once for all. The weekly or annual recurrences of these feasts, then, are not the whole had in view in these institutions; but the system of such recurrences: all of which take their date from the same remarkable period, and commemorate the same thing. Whatever, therefore, determines the commencing period of any one of them, determines that of them all: and, if such period was fixed at the egress, which I contend was the fact, the Sabbaths, &c. to be observed, so long as that period was intended to be in force, must have had an authority equal to that established at the creation.

to be observed by them, was fixed. It had, therefore, these peculiarities in it,—it was a mark or sign subsisting between God and them alone, with regard to this occurrence; and this occurrence it memorialised. But, on the same day, they were also commanded to memorialise the primitive Sabbath of rest. It also differed in point of time from the Sabbath held, but misunderstood and abused, by their heathen neighbours; which nevertheless was binding upon them; and which they still kept, dedicating it to their primary deity the sun.

In the next place, it will be difficult to account in any other way for the fact, that the heathen, who had apostatised from the true religion, kept another day.* No reason for their having made a change in the day can be adduced, as far as my information goes; and, from the circumstance that they appear to have been unanimous in dedicating their principal day of worship to the sun, and hence naming it Sunday, no reasonable doubt can, perhaps, be entertained that this was the day originally devoted to the Sabbath of

* That the heathen kept a seventh day sacred, is generally, and fairly enough, inferred from the following passages, collected by Clemens Alexandrinus and others from the Greek poets. *Ἐβδοματῇ δ' ἡπείτα καθηλυθέν ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.* "Afterwards, on the seventh, the sacred day descended."—*Ἐβδομον ἡμᾶρ ἐνν, καὶ τῇ τετέλεισ' ἅπαντα.* "The seventh day was, and all things had been finished on it."—*Ἐβδομη ἦν ἱερή.* "The seventh was sacred."—*Ἐβδοματῇ τοῦ λιπομένην ῥοὴν ἐξ Ἀχέρωντος.* "And on the seventh morning we left the stream of Acheron."—*Καὶ ἑβδομη ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.* "And the seventh sacred day."—*Ἐβδοματῇ αὐτῇ λαμπρὸν φῶς ἡέλιου.* "And again the seventh, the bright shining of the sun."—*Ἐβδομη ἐν ἀγαθοῖσι, καὶ ἑβδομη ἐστὶ γενεθλῆ.* "The seventh was among good things, and the seventh was the birth day."—*Ἐβδομη ἐν πρῶτοις, καὶ ἑβδομη ἐστὶ τέλειη.* "The seventh is among the first, and the seventh is perfect."—*Ἐβδοματῇ δὴ, καὶ τετέλεισμένα πάντα τετυκται.* "The seventh, indeed, on which all things were finished."—*Ἐβδοματῇ δ' τοῦ τετέλεισ' ἅπαντα.* "And on the seventh morning all things were finished." Dr. Wallis too cites the following, after Clemens, from Hesiod: "Begin we with the *first*, and the *fourth*, and the *seventh*, a sacred day, because that on this day Apollo, who has a golden sword, was born of Latona." Some of these passages identify themselves, beyond all doubt, with the original institution of the Sabbath, mentioned in Genesis, ii. 2, 3; and the last shews, what indeed innumerable other testimonies may be cited to shew, that this Sabbath was by the heathen dedicated to their supreme deity the sun, and is the same with our Sunday. Some have imagined, that the day dedicated to Saturn, our Saturday, was the great day with them; but this has not yet been proved, and, I conceive, cannot be. See Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v.

holy rest. We have, therefore, now two distinct days marked as Sabbaths: the one set apart authoritatively by Moses at the time of the egress, and regulated in its recurrence by that event; another sanctified at the creation, and made holy on that account;—and this appears to be that which the heathen retained as their *Sunday*.

Now, upon the resurrection of our Lord taking place, we find a certain day observed in the Church as a day of sacred rest; and this appears to have been termed *The Lord's Day*, (ἡ κυριακή ἡμέρα); and, what is most remarkable, this falls upon the very day, which appears to have been observed as such by the Patriarchs. Upon what authority this was observed, we are no where told, as Dr. Whately has truly remarked; but I think we can ascertain even this point also. For, if the day appointed for the observance of the Sabbath among the Jews, as a *peculiar* people, originated on the egress from Egypt; will it not follow, that upon that people's ceasing to be so, that appointment also, which could have been only temporary, would cease to be binding, not in the spirit, but in the letter of it? Other things of this sort we find entirely ceased. The tribe of Levi was no longer to have an exclusive right to the priesthood; our Lord himself arising out of the tribe of Judah: which, as St. Paul tells us, intimates a change in the law as to these particulars,—in this case the elder system was restored,—the Temple with its furniture “waxed old,” and was ready to vanish away, as the same Apostle also teaches us. And my question is, Did not the temporary and ceremonial observance of the Jewish Sabbath as necessarily cease to be binding? * I must confess I believe it did; and if this be just, then the original time for observing the Sabbath, must, by right, have recurred.

* So Justin Martyr, as I understand him, in the following passage :
 ‘Ὅς οὖν ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ ἤρξατο περιτομή, καὶ ἈΠΟ ΜΩΣΕΩΣ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ, καὶ θυσίαι, καὶ προσφοραὶ, καὶ εορταὶ, καὶ ἀπιδείχθη διὰ τὸ σκληροκάριον τοῦ λαοῦ ὑμῶν ταῦτα διατετάχθαι οὕτως παύσασθαι ἴδεις, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς βουλὴν, εἰς τὸν διὰ τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, καὶ φυλῆς Ιουδα, καὶ Δαβὶδ, παρθένου γεννηθέντα υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Χριστὸν, ὅστις καὶ αἰώνιος νόμος καὶ καινὴ διαθήκη τῷ παντὶ κόσμῳ ἐκκηρύσσεται προελευσόμενος, ὡς αἱ προλελεγμέναι προφητεῖαι σημαίνουσι.—*Dialog. cum Tryphone.* p. 222, edit. 1722. If it be replied, that the observance of the Sabbath among the Jews was not purely ceremonial, and therefore could not necessarily cease with the ceremonial observances generally, I answer: I have no objec-

Let us now see how the fourth commandment is framed ; for if it refer to the primitive institution only for its sanctions, it must still be binding in its spirit. Exod. xx. 8—12 : “ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; *but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God* : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.” This contains, perhaps, the original form of the commandment ; which is repeated nearly word for word in Deut. v. 12—14, as already remarked, with the additional charge given to the Israelites in remembrance of their delivery from Egypt. Separating all allusions of this sort, therefore, I think I may affirm, that our commandment loses all connection with the Jewish polity and its observances ; and that its authority stands on totally different grounds, and those which must first have made it binding upon all ; namely, the commandment of God himself with reference to the work of creation.

It is remarkable enough, that of those festivals which have remained, and are still kept by us in common with the Jews, none are retained in allusion to any thing purely Jewish, but with reference to something of a more general nature. Our Passover, for example, commemorates the death of Christ ; for it is said, “ Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed . . . therefore let us keep the feast : not with the OLD LEAVEN,” &c. ; which points out a blessing presented to all, and not merely to the family of Jacob. In like manner, our Pentecost, which falls in with that of the Jews, and which was celebrated by them for temporary considerations, is cele-

tion to this statement. My argument is this : If the day was once changed and then fixed to memorialise the Exodus, merely with reference to the Jews as a peculiar people ; upon a new system’s coming in, or rather upon the old one’s being restored, in which their peculiarity confessedly ceased, the change in the observance of this day could have been intended only as temporary : and the fact is, it is mentioned as such,—it was to be observed in “ their generations for ever,” *i. e.* so long as their generations alone should be matter of concern, or, as the Theocracy, to which this term is constantly applied, should last.

brated with us, in commemoration of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, vouchsafed for the instruction of all the heathen. The other feasts and fasts we totally disregard; not because they were not good, but because they ceased to be binding with the existence of the state for which they were given.

It is indeed truly remarkable, that our Lord's resurrection should give additional sanctity to this day; and further, that with this, not only should a door of faith be opened to the Gentiles; but that it should be put so entirely on the footing which it had in the days of the Patriarchs.

I think, therefore, I may conclude on this subject, in opposition both to Dr. Paley and Dr. Whately, that the ordinance of the Sabbath day is binding on Christians, and because its observance is enjoined in the fourth commandment. And I will affirm, that not only are we bound by the law of the land to keep it as good subjects; but that the legislature itself is bound to protect that law pure and inviolate: not because it is expedient to do so, as Dr. Paley thinks; but because they are bound by this same commandment, which it will be at their peril to transgress.—We now return to our more immediate subject.

SECTION XII.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY, THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, AND OF
THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

IT will not be easy perhaps to name a question, on which more mistake, rashness, or bad feeling, has been exercised, than that which relates to the doctrine of the Trinity: not, I believe, because it involves any thing more difficult, as far as it can be understood, than those we have hitherto touched upon; but because either erroneous principles of reasoning have been resorted to, or many of the plainest declarations of Scripture on the subject have been misunderstood and misapplied. Hence have arisen the endless controversies which have divided society on this question; and the consequence has been, as on many other occasions, that victory rather than truth, has, with many, been the principal object had in view. In discussing this question, therefore, we shall endeavour to

keep within the bounds prescribed by right reason, and closely to adhere to the plain and obvious declarations of Holy Writ.

Let it be remembered, then, in the first place, that our knowledge of the nature of the Deity must be extremely limited. We can gather, indeed, both from nature and the Scripture, that He must be infinitely wise and good, and that His power must be such, as far to exceed any idea we can form concerning it; but how these his attributes co-operate and harmonise, or how their influence is exerted for the good of inferior beings, it is quite impossible for us to say. Of the simple attribute of *infinity* we can entertain nothing like an adequate notion; much less can we of the combined operations of others, each of which possesses this property at the least. On subjects of this sort, therefore, it will be our wisdom to say nothing: and to speak on others connected with them, with that moderation and reverence, which the depth and awfulness of the subject demand.

If, then, we take our stand on nature, and view the apparently interminable depths of creation, examine its wonderful order and regularity; and then calculate, as far as discovery has enabled us, the astonishingly mighty and minute adjustment which regulates all its parts; we cannot but conclude, that as far as these extend, at least, there must also be kept up the exertion of a power equally stupendous; but, at the same time, as much superior to these things as the artificer among ourselves is to the most ingenious and accurately constructed machine. In the latter case, we can see indeed how the impelling forces are communicated and carried on; and hence can calculate their effects, by knowing the quantities and directions of their moving causes; but even here, let it be remembered, our experiments are all regulated by laws, of the origin or reason of which we can know nothing. In the government of the motions of the universe, however, in which whole, and apparently eternal, systems of order and of action are kept up, we discover nothing of the cumbrance of machinery, nothing of the ropes and pulleys, the levers or the inclined planes, to which we are obliged to have recourse. Here all is quiet, orderly, and constant,—all, from the mightiest system down to the smallest insect, pursuing, without a murmur or sensible deviation, the great end for which they have been severally

called into being. The Power, then, which has formed and still regulates these, is not only immense, omnipotent, and unsearchable, *but wonderful in operation*: his thoughts must therefore be as much above our thoughts as his ways are above our ways: but what these are, let none presume to determine.

This is, I think, what reasonable inquiry would arrive at with respect to the Deity; and this is just what our Scriptures teach us. "He is the Creator of all things," say they, and "by Him all things do consist." "In Him we live and move and have our being;" and He is "the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, before whom the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers." "He is," say they, "the *eternal* and *invisible* God, whom no man hath seen or can see;" and, "known to Him are all his works, from the beginning to the end;" and, again, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," and "not so much as a sparrow can fall without his permission." To Him the grass of the field owes its verdure, the blossoms their beauty, and every thing existing its origin and its support.

Here, then, reason and Scripture agree:—they go hand in hand as far as knowledge is either attainable or useful, and there they stop. One remarkable difference, not discord, is, however, observable here, which is this: Our Scripture deigns to carry reason one step farther, in order to shew it, that God is not only an object of wonder and of terror, of majesty and power unapproachable; but of love inexhaustible: that not only is his care and providence extended to worlds innumerable; but his goodness and love to thousands of generations, insomuch that a hair of their head cannot perish, nor one of their seed beg their bread. Nor is this superfluous. The *reasonable soul* must have perished, had it remained destitute of knowledge and mercy such as this. The mighty fabric of God's works could, in such a case, only have overwhelmed the mind in its endeavours to catch something like an adequate idea of His wisdom and greatness; while its hope, its love, and its sympathies, must have languished and expired. Here it could have found nothing capable of administering instruction or strength to its weaknesses, and nothing to foster or call forth the warm expressions of its praise. In this respect we may truly say,

The law of the Lord is perfect, sweeter than honey, or the droppings of the honey-comb; and that in keeping it there is indeed a great reward.

We have arrived, then, at one conclusion, in which we find Scripture and reason united; and in which, generally speaking, there is no difference of opinion. Let us now approach the next question, namely, the Divinity of the Son; and here, as before, we will first consult reason, and, secondly, the Scripture.

If we can suppose it at all necessary, that a knowledge of God as an *object of worship* should be revealed, we can also see that some *definite* idea of his being ought also to be made known. Men are not sent into this world with minds rich in metaphysical knowledge; few can be so circumstanced or gifted as ever to make any considerable progress in this; and even the few who do, entertain notions so vague, discordant, and dissatisfactory, on the plainest questions, that any thing but agreement is found to exist among them. It may, therefore, have been the will of the Deity to afford, in condescension to our weaknesses, a definite idea of himself, in the Being called in the Scriptures *his Son*; and hence, perhaps, we are informed that our first parents were created in the *image of God* :* hence too we read of

* And, perhaps, with this view it is said, (Rom. v. 14,) that “Adam was the figure (τύπος) of him who was to come,”—namely, of Christ: and if so, the being created in the image of God must mean, not in the image of him who was and is invisible, but of him who should be revealed; which is fully justified in the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John. Hence, too, perhaps, the frequent instances occurring in the Old Testament, where the word *angel* is so used as to be synonymous with Jehovah and Elohim. (Gen. xxxii. 29; Hosea, xii. 4, 5, &c.) The ancient Jews and Targumists gave this person the title of the Word (דְּבָרַי or מִימְרָא), which Philo prostitutes and identifies with the λόγος of Plato, in order to suit his Platonism. In the same sense is it taken by St. John, i. 1, &c. It seems to me, moreover, scarcely to admit of a doubt, that the personification of WISDOM in the Proverbs, chapters viii. and ix., is intended to apply in the same manner with the Targumic מִימְרָא (Word) and the Word (λόγος) of St. John: and, it is very remarkable, that the Targums of Jerusalem and of the Pseudo-Jonathan commence the first verse in Genesis with “*By wisdom*,” (בְּחִכְמָה) adopting the very sentiment contained in the Proverbs, viii. 22, 23, &c., which the writers of the New Testament apply immediately to Christ. (John, i. 3; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. iii. 3; Rev. iii. 14, &c.) This seems to have been the opinion of the ancient Jews, the Apostles, and some of the first

Jehovah having appeared to the Patriarchs and others in the form of a man; not for the purpose of lowering the idea which they ought to have entertained of Him, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain; but only, to concentrate and present to their minds some definite idea of himself as the object of Divine worship. Now, to shew that there was a necessity that something like this should be done, we may perhaps cite the general character of man, as exemplified throughout the world, and in heathen countries in particular.

The notions of God held by the originators of idolatry, seem, as far as we can ascertain them, to have been as nearly concurrent as possible with the abstract notion generally held, and which we have already shewn is consistent both with Scripture and reason; but in all these cases, images, perhaps as personifications, were resorted to for the use of the many; and there are not wanting even in Christian churches, and in modern times, those who still argue for the use of these; and who actually introduce images for the purpose of collecting the wandering thoughts of both the literate and the illiterate,—a custom deemed unnecessary and actually for-

Fathers of the Church. That something similar might have been held by Plato, is easily enough to be accounted for, if such opinion existed, as it appears it did, among the Jews, prior to his times. The doctrine taught by Plato, however, differed most widely from that taught by the Jews: with him it formed part of the emanation system of philosophy; with them an article of religious belief, which they dared not attempt to explain. The manner in which the Targum of Jerusalem speaks on this subject is well worth notice,—it is this (Gen. iii. 22): **ואמר מימרא דיי אלהים הא אדם רברית יתיה יחירי** &c. **בנו עלמי היך מה דאנא יחירי בשמי מרומא** “And the Word of the Lord God said, Behold Adam, whom I have created alone (or rather only one, or only-begotten one) in my world, even as I am alone (or only one, or only-begotten one) in the high heavens;” where, as Glassius justly remarks, (“*Christologia Mosaica*,” p. 28), we see the Word (*λόγος*) of St. John exhibited as the only-begotten, full of grace and truth. Bertholdt, indeed, has, in his “*Christologia Judæorum*,” thought proper to treat every thing occurring of this kind as mythical, as the mere fabrications of poetical genius, or the inventions of philosophy. We know, however, of neither poetry nor philosophy cultivated by the Jews, independent of their Bible; and their Bible they have always maintained to be God’s word: their notions, therefore, must have grown out of the Bible, not the Bible out of their notions, as Mr. Bertholdt preposterously contends: and it is as much in our power, now to determine how far these notions are correct, as it was in that of any uninspired men at any day: being in possession, as we are, of the authentic documents used by them.

bidden in the Scriptures; and for this reason: Men are there taught to *worship the Son* even as *they worship the Father*; that in him all *the fulness of the Godhead dwells*; that he is *the express image* of his person; that he *is God*, and was *God* in the beginning; that he had glory with the Father *before the world began*; that he is the *Creator of all things*, and that *without him was not any thing made that was made*. And our Lord himself expressly declares, that he who had seen him had (as far as *He* could be seen) *seen the Father*; and that he and the Father are one. Here then a definite, not an abstract, notion of the Deity as the object of religious worship is inculcated: and I think I may affirm, that it is sufficiently intelligible for the most ignorant; while it presents nothing likely, either to offend the reason, to exceed the credibility, or be unsuitable to the wants, of the learned.

Another intelligible and practical end for which the Son of God was revealed, was to make an atonement for the sins of man; which we have seen could be effected by no other: but on this we shall now offer nothing more than this remark. We may, however, notice the circumstance of God made manifest in the flesh in one other point of view, and one in which it cannot but be valuable to us: it is this: Example is better than precept; it is, we know, more easy to be understood, and less likely to be mistaken. The Scriptures, we also know, have been and still are, grievously misunderstood and misapplied. Words are at best but unsteady mediums of instruction; and it is on this account, that so much mistake is found to exist on this, and, indeed, on every subject, where nothing more stable can be called in to our aid. The example of Christ is therefore, in this respect, beyond all estimation valuable; and particularly with reference to those cases, in which we are, through the infirmities inseparable from our nature, most likely to fail. Experience tells us, that trial is the common lot of man: philosophy assures us, that it is unavoidable, and almost necessary: true religion declares, that the believer's undisturbed place of rest is in another state of being. But it is the character of Christ alone which exhibits the rich combination of power without insolence, dignity without pomp, faith without ostentation—of forbearance, forgiveness, and even prayer for his enemies, under circumstances the

most aggravated and painful. It is here, indeed, that we can, for the first and the last time, see at once the power to avenge, to forbear, and to forgive, united: wealth unlimited, for he was King of the princes of the earth, associated with the wanderer who had not where to lay his head; and all undertaken, submitted to, and carried on, purely to seek and to save that which was lost, and to reconcile fallen man with his offended Maker and God. Whatever philosophy may have thought of its ideal perfect man,* (and, in this respect, its conclusions are valuable,) we possess, in the simple and unaffected narrative of the Evangelists, infinitely more, and what is incomparably better, in the life and conversation of the Son of God: virtue higher than any thing which morality has ever dictated; and purposes as just as they are glorious and animating, exhibited, realised, recommended. And if these are, indeed, such as to exceed every expectation fully to make our own; they are still such as we can cordially labour to imitate. And, when it is known, that grace sufficient shall be afforded, faith can rest assured, that its labour shall never be in vain. Here, then, we have (what it is reasonable to expect would be afforded, had the Deity himself condescended to instruct and inform us) precepts the most perfect and pure, illustrated and urged by an example the most intelligible and encouraging. And, if these are too elevated to allow of even a hope that they can ever be altogether complied with by us, they do, at least, present us with something with which the most fastidious can never find fault, or the most illiterate misunderstand; and, what is perhaps the crowning glory of them all, they teach us that, "*if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.*" But, it may be affirmed, that had an imperfect law been proposed for the purpose of regulating our conduct, or an imperfect example to illustrate it, then might an objection fairly have been urged against both the divinity and reasonableness of such a system; and finally, against its general reception. In the present case, however, we have not only ample room for the exertion of the highest virtues; but encouragement to press on for the acquisition

* Plato's Republics, book 2.

of still greater degrees of excellence, with an example before us, which can only become the more amiable and inviting the more nearly we approach it; and which cannot but administer greatly to our strength, while it holds out the certain prospect of success.

Questions may, however, arise as to the particular Divinity of the Son; whether, for instance, he may be considered as Divine, by himself and alone, and be compared with the Father, as it regards His several attributes, or otherwise.

I answer: I can only say, that as the Scripture appears to represent Christ as proceeding from the Father, and being *very God*, just as any son of man may be said to proceed from his natural father and be *very man*, although it is quite out of my power to particularise about the process in either case; so I think I can reasonably believe Christ to be of God, and very God; a Being proceeding from the eternal, invisible, and incomprehensible Fountain of life and light, and adapted to the comprehension of creatures such as we are, as far as such comprehension is necessary to *our instruction and welfare*. If it be asked, Whether the Father and the Son can be considered, each as existing absolutely and independently of the other, and exerting the powers of independent Deity? I answer at once: I cannot tell. Reason has nothing to offer on the subject, the one way or the other; and the Scriptures are silent. The revelation of the Divinity of our Lord seems to have been made for *practical*, not *abstract*, purposes; and, if the salvation of the soul can be secured on this view of it, I need never be anxious about the metaphysical part of the question. Further knowledge may, indeed, enable me to enter upon this: but, as I am fully convinced that such knowledge is now unattainable; I am content, as I think I ought to be, with that which has been revealed, and revealed manifestly for my good. If it be said, that what has just been advanced is impossible, and therefore incredible; my answer is: I wish to be informed on what grounds this impossibility can be made out. All that can be said must amount merely to this: that it is not consistent with what we now know; but this I shall deny. It indeed requires knowledge greater than any we possess, but it presents nothing inconsistent with what we have. Any king may invest his son with the executive part of his

government; and this we know has often been done. The analogy, therefore, will here hold good, as far as our *knowledge* of the different cases extends. And, if the nature of such king be, that he is invisible, incomprehensible, and inaccessible, (which we may suppose, for the sake of argument,) it will perhaps be difficult to conceive any other method, by which an intercourse with his subjects could be carried on. Let it be borne in mind, however, It is not my intention to attempt to solve this mighty problem; much less to limit the powers of Christ to the executive of the Christian dispensation. I only contend for the reasonableness of the doctrine; and maintain, that he is revealed to us, and represented as having created all things, and being the judge of all men: that this is all I know, and therefore all I can say; but it will not hence follow, that this is all the truth, or all that is known on this subject by superior beings: this will involve questions totally different, and questions with which I have nothing whatever to do. I only contend, that the doctrine, as far as it is known, is reasonable and most encouraging; that it presents the object of Christian worship, as dignified and definite; as the *anointed* of the Father, and appointed the head of all things to his Church; as the *prophet, priest, and king*, of his followers; and as the judge and avenger of his own honour. That such a Being should become incarnate,* I can see nothing either difficult or improbable to suppose; particularly if some adequate end was had in view; and this, we are plainly taught, was the case. How the Deity ought to dispose of his favours or exercise his power, it cannot be the province of reason to determine; if he has exercised the one, and disposed of the other, in a way intelligible, and such as to make them available and accessible to all, (which we

* John, i. 14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," &c. And Heb. ii. 16: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." The consideration of Christ's becoming incarnate, in order to accommodate himself to our capacity, is often dwelt upon by the earlier fathers of the Church; and, as they generally applied this in answer to the philosophers of their day, it appears to me to be sound and appropriate. See Catholic Epist. of Barnabas; Wake's edit. pp. 166, 7. "But he . . . was content . . . to appear in the flesh . . . *For had he not come in the flesh, how should men have been able to look upon him, that they might be saved?*" &c. So Ignatius, *ib.* p. 73: "*God (himself) appearing in the form of a man.*" Justin Martyr, I. Apol. ed. 1700. pp. 10, 46, 95, &c. See also

are taught he has done), it is the duty of reason, not only to accede, but to be thankful; not only to admire, but to extol; and to bring all situated within the sphere of its influence, both to embrace and to enjoy.

Another very common and very plausible argument advanced on this subject is:—The Scriptures represent God as *One*; but the doctrine of a Trinity represents him as *Three*; arguing, nevertheless, at the same time, that God is *One*; and thus presenting the insuperable paradox, that *One* is *Three*, and *Three* are *One*. I will answer: If this is really the state of the case, nothing can be more absurd or monstrous. If, for example, any one should affirm and insist upon it, that *one man* is *three men*; and *vice versâ*, that *three men* are only *one man*, I should have no hesitation whatever in affirming, that such person must be out of his senses. But, I believe, this is not the true state of the case. The truth is, it is only a *supposition* stated as a fact; and then from this, the argument, framed on what has been termed a *reductio ad absurdum*, has been proposed. The doctrine is, as I understand it, thus held: God is *One*; but this *One* God has, for reasons the most encouraging to us, thought proper to reveal himself in the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In the first, he is the incomprehensible origin of all things; in the second, he is my Redeemer; and in the third, he supports and sanctifies me. The end of all this I can see and appreciate; but how this mystery exists, revelation has no where informed me; and, the facts of the case being far above my observation and research, reason cannot. The miraculous character of the Bible (for such it professes to be) demands my faith in all its declarations; but the limited nature of my faculties will not enable me fully to analyse them all;

the Bishop of Lincoln's admirable work on Justin's opinions, &c. chap. ii.; Shepherd of Hermas (edit. 1710), p. 280; Arnobius adversus Gentes, lib. i. p. 36 (ed. 1634). Irenæus, lib. iii. cap. 18, has: "Unus Christus Jesus Dominus noster . . . invisibilis visibilis factus, et incomprehensibilis factus comprehensibilis, et impassibilis passibilis, et Verbum homo." *Ib.* cap. 20: . . . "Per quem omnia facta sunt, qui et semper aderat generi humano, hunc in novissimis temporibus, secundum præfinitum tempus à Patre, unitum suo plasmati, passibilem hominem factum," &c. Eusebius, in his "Demonstratio Evangelica" (as does also Dr. Clarke, in his "Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity") accounts for this mystery by having recourse to the *emanation system*. This is more than I dare do.

and this last may be said of every elemental principle in every science. These I must take for granted. Is it, then, I ask, too much to require, that reason should stop short when the essence of the Divine mind is proposed for matter of debate? or, the manner in which it exists, or ought to be revealed, is attempted to be ascertained? To say, in such a case, that the persons in which He has thought proper to reveal himself, being three, cannot subsist in his divinity, because that is said to be one, is to assume a knowledge of principles and of facts, to which none but a madman would think of laying claim; and, to determine what must be the nature and particular properties of an Almighty Being, whom no man hath seen, or can see. Why, then, it may again be asked, has the revelation said so much on this subject, and so little that can be reduced to the level of our capacities? Why, for example, has it introduced the question sufficiently definite to excite inquiry, and then stopped short, refusing that further information, which is necessary to ensure belief? My answer is: There appears to me to be no more revealed on this point, than is necessary to be believed by every man who would entertain a reasonable hope of salvation. If it was, indeed, the will of the Deity that this should be effected by the redemption that is in Christ; and by the power which we are further taught consists in his mediation: and if both reason and the Scripture have declared, that no man can redeem his brother; and that this fell not within the compass even of angelic powers; then was it reasonable and right that the uncreated dignity of the Redeemer should also be revealed, in order to demand and to exercise the faith of every candidate for eternal bliss. Cursed, we know, is he that trusteth in any son of man, however lofty his situation or extensive his power: but, when we are told that our Redeemer was with God before the world existed, and was God, and that he then enjoyed the incommunicable glory of the Father; we then know that he is worthy to be honoured, even as the Father is; and that he who believes in the Father, can with confidence also believe in him. But we are also told, that although now elevated above the heaven, he is still touched with the feelings of our infirmities: and if so, then are the principles and the object of our faith

complete in all their parts; and it will follow, that he who doubts, doubts unreasonably; and most justly deserves all the consequences pronounced against unbelief.

But suppose we allow, that greater information might have been given on this subject; What now, it might be asked, could have been its object or its end? The main ends had already been sufficiently provided for; namely, the salvation of the soul: the utmost, then, for which this knowledge could have been afforded must have been to satisfy *curiosity*; and Who shall tell where this curiosity should end? Instead of having a revelation of moderate length, we must now have had one drawn out to an enormous extent, and dealing in matter in many cases the most frivolous, and in others the most obscure possible; such as, in fact, a great part of the pretended revelations of the Hindus and Buddhists is; which every body knows could never have come from a wise and good God. But suppose we allow, that a real revelation of all the mysteries of heaven and earth could have been made (and it is best to suppose *all*, in order to meet the whole of every case), the question will now be: To whom could such a revelation have been sent, in order to secure its being understood? Certainly not to the learned; for, whatever knowledge they may possess, the nature of the case makes it quite impossible they can know any thing whatsoever of the particulars of a spiritual world: all they know is drawn from the experience of things about them; all they believe beyond this is mere conjecture. Such revelation, therefore, were it made at all, would labour under this difficulty, viz. that *no one could understand it*; for it would be in vain to apply to the ignorant, where the learned had failed. The revelation we have, does, therefore, to my mind, stop at the very point at which a revelation from above would stop: it imparts all that is necessary for the purposes of salvation, and all on these points into which we are qualified to enter: and here it most prudently forbids further inquiry: leaving, as it ought to do, the exercise of our talents for the acquisition of those arts and sciences, which will be beneficial to society and creditable to ourselves; but demanding an implicit faith in those things which, how elevated soever above our powers to analyse, are, nevertheless, to the meanest capacity, such as cannot fail to be the most instructive and encouraging.

Having said thus much on the divinity of the Son, and on the general question relating to these mysterious points, it will not be necessary to urge much on the doctrine of the third person,—namely, the Holy Ghost. All we know is, The Scriptures speak plainly and repeatedly of such person, and in a way sufficiently guarded, to convince us that no confusion existed in the minds of the persons who committed them to writing. “If I go not from you,” says our Lord, “the Comforter (the Spirit, whom the world cannot receive) will not come; but if I go, I WILL SEND HIM.”—“Baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”—“The Holy Ghost had not yet been given.”—“They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” It will be unnecessary to cite more passages on this subject: nothing can be more clear, distinct, or orderly than the manner in which these are enounced. In the first instance, the personality of the one is delivered precisely in the same manner with that of the other; and, whatever may be the precise fact of the case, it can be nothing short of impiety to endeavour, by any forced gloss, to give a different representation of the doctrine. Reason knows nothing of the matter farther than its duty to bow to whatever is proposed on good and adequate grounds; and faith will at once recognise its duty both to believe and to adore. In the last citation, the effects, as of a powerful and almighty agent, are expressly stated: and, throughout the writings of the Apostles, as well as in many places of the Old Testament, the assisting co-operations of this Divine being are pointed out as the privilege for which the believer ought to pray. But how this being exists, or is identified, or united, or co-operates, with the Father and the Son, I know not: no one has informed me; and therefore I must be content to remain ignorant. One thing I know, and with this I am satisfied. The Scriptures represent him as an object of faith; they insist on this again and again. They go farther; they tell me of his offices; that he is the Comforter; that he must dwell within me; must sanctify and preserve me, until the day of redemption, unless I would be a reprobate. These aids I know I want; and these I know, too, the Scriptures most distinctly and clearly promise to him who duly seeks them. But, as to the particulars,

how, and in what way, and when, these effects are to be brought about, I am not told ; and I think, if I were, I should be no gainer by the additional information. The same is the case in the natural world. The acorn, by some means or other, becomes an oak ; the grain of corn grows up into an ear ; and the wildest flower on the plain springs up, blossoms, and yields its seed, by a power equally far removed from my comprehension, and impervious to my research. All, however, as far as I can see and judge, is conspiring to promote some good and beneficent end ; and with this knowledge I am, as I ought to be, thankful and content.

But suppose I am discontent. Will the exertion of any powers with which man is endued carry me any farther ? And must not all my endeavours in these pursuits end in failure ? The experiments already made on these subjects are certainly numerous enough to convince all future adventurers, that to press them farther must end in similar discomfiture and disappointment. But this is not all ; failure is not the only consequence to be dreaded ; gross impiety will also attach itself to the endeavour : and, what is still more to be feared, the being given up to a reprobate mind : a positive withdrawalment of the means of grace may be again, as it often has been, the fate of him who has boldness enough to deny, that “secret things belong to the Lord our God,” and to pry into those things for which neither powers nor information have been afforded, such as to warrant any sound or useful results. Religion, to deserve that name, must necessarily rest on faith ; and that cannot be termed faith which resolves every thing to the evidence of sight. Faith cannot indeed be exerted, where the matter to be believed is manifestly absurd or inconsistent ; but no such thing can be affirmed of this doctrine. The utmost that can be said is, It is inexplicable ; or, in the words of the Psalmist, “It is high, I cannot attain unto it ;” which is a very different thing from affirming that it is incredible. Difficulties equally great and insurmountable attach themselves to some part or other of every science ; and, indeed, to the commonest phenomena in life ; but yet no one is absurd enough to say that, because these are inexplicable, they are incredible. Such an assertion would be deemed madness ; and yet it is often thought a part of the profoundest wisdom, boldly to

make such on these mysterious and highly intricate points : but this, whatever else it may be, cannot be the office of right reason.

SECTION XIII.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

HAVING shewn that the most important doctrines of our Scriptures are not unreasonable, when viewed in their native simplicity, and unencumbered with foreign matter ; we now come to consider the *authority* on which they are grounded ; and if we can shew this to be divine, no possible doubt can then remain as to the duty of receiving them.

We shall find, upon a little inquiry, that the Scriptures we possess came into our hands either from Jews, or from those who had once been Jews : but at what period they began to be made known does not appear : from a deliberate review of the question, however, we shall find that, in all probability, some of them were known long before the Jews existed as a people. That the Jews, upon their delivery from Egypt, had some new laws given them by Moses, we are assured both by the Scriptures themselves and by profane authority. Of this fact, therefore, no doubt can reasonably exist ; but, when we come to examine the statements found in the Bible, we have the strongest reasons for believing, that a very considerable and very important part of it, had been known to the world long before. It has been usual, I know, to suppose that its first part (*i. e.* the Book of Genesis) had been either preserved by oral tradition to the times of Moses, or that it was made known to him by inspiration. There is, however, no good ground for giving credit to either of these suppositions, for the following reasons : first, it would seem extremely *improbable*, that a document of such immense importance as this book is, should be committed to memory only ; because, how few soever the persons might have been to whom it would in such case be intrusted, the danger either of losing, forgetting, or altering, something, would have been so great, as to leave little likelihood, that posterity would know much on the real nature of its contents. Besides, the fewness of the persons concerned would, according to my notions, rather

have increased than diminished this danger ; because, here we should have had no checks,—nothing to correct the lapses of memory, to which we know the greatest and best men are liable ; nor will their extreme long lives mend the matter. The particulars of facts long ago known, are apt to escape the best memories ; and the longer the period is since their occurrence, in the same proportion are the facilities for mistake generally multiplied. The document under consideration does, we know, abound in particulars the most likely to be thus mistaken and mis-stated ; such, for example, as the numbers of years the patriarchs are said to have lived, the proper names of the founders of families, of their sons, sons' sons, daughters, &c., for many generations ; the several ages to which these lived before they had children, and the like, which nothing but the memories of angels could possibly have retained. Add to this, the several prophecies, evidently intended to be preserved to the latest generations, many of which could scarcely have been understood by the patriarchs in all their bearings ; but in which either the omission or alteration of one word only would have introduced irremediable confusion. Take, for example, the prophecy of the woman's seed bruising the serpent's head, as in Gen. iii. 15, in which the slightest alteration would have given occasion to the most grievous mistakes.* These things, I think, when duly considered, will make it highly probable, that tradition was not had recourse to during the first two thousand years of the world.

In the second place, I know of no good reason why we should suppose tradition to have been the first medium through which the revelation passed. The Jews, indeed, say that this was the case ; but of this they can afford no proof whatever : and, when we know their proneness to magnify Moses as their national leader,—their extreme vanity, in supposing that all knowledge, science, &c., the world ever saw, came from them,—and, what is still more remarkable, their immoderate attachment to the doctrine of tradition, we have abundant reason for believing that this notion is a mere Jewish figment. Nor can there, as far as I can see, any good

* We know of one instance of this kind, in which *He* (shall bruise, &c.) was changed to *She* ; a most unpardonable liberty taken in the Catholic edition of the Hebrew and Latin Bible of 1572.

reason be assigned, why we may not suppose that this document was, from the very first, committed to writing. It will perhaps be said, that writing was unknown at this early period. But who can prove this? Were not the nine hundred years, during which the first man lived, space sufficient for the invention of the rudest sort of writing imaginable (for even this would be infinitely superior to tradition)? Is it necessary I ask, to suppose, that none but Egyptians could have ingenuity enough to discover something like the hieroglyphical or picture-writing, which was found some years ago among the savages of Peru? In the first ages of the world, savage life was unknown, if we may believe the Scriptures; and to this, the nature of the case will afford abundant support. If men could, in those days, build cities, establish governments, make progress in all the refinements of civilised life, I am at a loss to discover, why we should suppose it impossible they could have been acquainted with any sort of writing. In the book of Job, which is manifestly as old as the Exodus, and a book of Scripture perfectly independent of any thing which originated with the Jews, we have the mention of *writing a book* occurring as something well known;* and there is not the least reason for supposing, that Job had any intercourse whatever with the Egyptians. The probability therefore is, that writing was in use before the days of Moses; nor can any good reason be adduced, why it may not have been known as early as the days of the first man. When, moreover, we take into the account the consideration, that it was just as necessary the very first prophecy should be correctly delivered down, as it was that it should be revealed; we are compelled, I think, to come to the conclusion, that He who gave the revelation itself would have provided, that it should be thus correctly retained.

If we suppose, in the next place, that all the book of Genesis was given to Moses by revelation, still the fact will remain that there was a prior revelation, which the Almighty thought it expedient on this occasion to restore. In this case, we must perhaps suppose that the prior revelation had been lost; which will be sufficient to condemn the doctrine of tradition; because, it is on the supposition only of tradition

* Job, xix. 23; xxxi. 35.

being had recourse to, that this loss could have been sustained. The revelation, therefore, which we now have, is probably,—in part at least,—as old as the times of the first family; and, on every view, it is certainly the oldest book in the world. That it has been preserved with an astonishing degree of accuracy, down to our times, is beyond all doubt; and so far its claim to credibility is complete and convincing.

Let us now consider the nature of its authority. The authority to which the Scriptures lay claim is, as already noticed, Divine. That the truths it professes to teach could have been obtained from any other quarter is certainly impossible: and, as it has been remarked, if no such grounds of authority can be shewn properly to belong to this book, it will follow, that the claims thus made ought to be treated as imposture. The only questions we now have to discuss will, therefore, be,—first, whether it is reasonable to suppose any such authority would be afforded in any case; and, secondly, whether we have good reason for believing, that such authority has been actually afforded.

With regard to the first, If it can be supposed that a knowledge of religion is at all necessary to man,—and the experience of all ages and nations may be cited to shew that it is; and, if it is a fact, that man as such has it not in his power to propose any thing which will deserve that name,—then must it follow, that in order to supply mankind with the needful boon, God himself must vouchsafe to discover it. In the dealings of Providence in the world around us, we know that the most abundant provisions have been made for the happiness, but none for the misery, of the creature; and this we know could have been effected by nothing short of Almighty power. We have, then, in this respect, every reason for believing that the power of the Deity has been, and is still, exerted. Why may we not then suppose, that the same power has been, and is still, also exerted, for the purpose of bringing about ends in many respects analogous, but in all superior, and infinitely more valuable in purpose and durability. If it be necessary that the great Maker of the universe exert a power either ordinary or extraordinary, which is manifestly his own, for the purpose of “feeding the ravens, or clothing the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven;” can it in any way be

unreasonable that he should exert the same power, but in a direction in some respects different, yet suited to bring about the beneficent end proposed, when the interests of man, temporary and eternal, can be secured by no other means? Whatever may be said of the means themselves considered separately (and these we have shewn are both good and suitable), there can be nothing unreasonable in the supposition, that they would be afforded. On the contrary, nothing can be more probable, as formerly remarked, than that He who has provided so abundantly for the body, would also make an adequate provision for the soul; and, if it can be shewn, that the facts of the case are such as to establish this position, the authority to which our Revelation lays claim, will be complete, and binding upon all.

With regard to our second question, then, The claim made to belief is, that of *an open and continued series of miracles*.* It may here be remarked, that had the claim made consisted of some one miraculous operation only, performed perhaps in the presence of a few selected individuals; or, had the series (supposing one to have existed), how extended soever it might have been, remained unknown except to a party, whose interest it might have been to propagate and keep up a system of fraud; or, had the acts themselves been public, but doubtful as to their real character, or trivial as to their object and end; or, had a knowledge of these supposed events come down to us through the medium of oral tradition only, or, if committed to writing, had presented to us much that was doubtful as to their origin, or suspicious from the variety of the copies, or from the palpable mistakes and contradictions with which they abounded; and, in addition to this, had these accounts been opposed, refuted, or disregarded, by the considerate and respectable part of society, and been held in estimation only by a few of the immoral, fanciful, or enthusiastic, who were perhaps addicted to the marvellous, and blind to the requirements of reason and sobriety; then, I say, might we with justice have refused our assent to the claims made, and properly enough resisted the authority advanced. Because, that which is palpably untrue, or probably false, must, of all things, be the

* See the second and third sermons in this volume.

least likely to advance the interests of human society; or, because, that which makes no claim whatever to our belief, or which, in doing so, betrays a bad one, can never rise higher in our estimation, than merely to leave us where it found us, unmoved, indifferent, and excusable.

Of our Revelation, however, it may be truly affirmed, that not one of these weak or doubtful circumstances attaches itself either to its origin, progress, or present state. We have, on the contrary, a series of miracles the most open and artless, the best attested, the most connected in matter and in object, and yet the most various, distinct, and widely divided, as to time, persons, interests, and events, that can possibly be imagined. We have too the testimonies of both friends and foes, commenced in the earliest antiquity, and carried down through the lapse of numerous ages, that however the text, the relations, or the doctrines, ought to be considered, the facts detailed are true and worthy of all acceptance.

It may be said in reply, perhaps, that still the truth of such miraculous events having taken place, depends after all upon the credit of a few historians: We answer: That the historians are not numerous we willingly allow; but then, they are such, supported as they are by innumerable collateral circumstances, as are worthy of all credit. They had, moreover, no earthly point to gain in giving their several testimonies; and many of them sealed these with their blood.—Again, if it once became necessary that miracles should cease (and surely they need not have been continued, when no adequate end could thus be secured); then would it also become necessary, that every succeeding age should consult the histories of past times, in order to put themselves in possession of the evidences of religion. If we have, however, in the case of our evidences, to look back, and to examine the histories of past times; we also have a combination of testimonies, given, indeed, by various and independent writers, conspiring to afford an assurance not less miraculous and convincing on the whole, than the several particulars themselves must have once been, taken singly. Those miracles, however, which consist of predictions (and with these our Scripture abounds) can never, so long as the testimony of history remains, lose their power to astonish and to convince: and

when we consider these in their character, as interwoven with one another, and with the fates of nations, as will be noticed in some cases hereafter in this work ; we are forced to the conclusion, that this is the “ Lord’s doings, and that it is wonderful in our eyes.”—It is not, however, our intention here to enter upon the proofs requisite to establish these points ; this would be to trespass on the province of those who have written on the evidences of revealed religion. To these writers, therefore, the reader is now referred. *

* Paley’s Evidences, Chalmer’s Evidences, Lardner’s Credibility, &c. The ancient apologists, Justin Martyr, Josephus against Apion, Origen against Celsus, Eusebii Præparatio and Demonstratio Evangelica, Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, &c. &c.

DISSERTATION I.

PART II.

SECTION I.

ON THE VIEWS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE MODERN RATIONALISTS OF
GERMANY.

IT should seem, from what has been laid down in the foregoing pages, that our Scriptures, considered in the light which has usually been termed orthodox, present nothing unreasonable, much less impossible, to the belief of Christians; and that what they do present, rests on the best, and indeed the only, grounds, which can ensure acceptance with beings truly rational. Objections loud and frequent have, however, been made to this view of the subject, and particularly of late years, by a large and respectable body of divines in Germany; who hesitate not to affirm that it is *unreasonable*, and, indeed, incompatible with the additional and progressive light, with which modern times have been blest; and that it must, therefore, be entirely given up. Assertions like these cannot but be alarming, because they imply that mistake and error have attached themselves to Christianity from the very period, perhaps, in which it was first promulgated; and this will involve a charge either of blindness or corruption, or both, against those who have been its authorised teachers. But this might be borne, were a better, a more safe, and a more efficient view, proposed by those who make the objection; for I believe it cannot be of much importance generally, as to what different polemics may think on different but unimportant points of religious dispute, provided the ends for which religion itself has been given can be secured. Truth, however, is here the main point at issue. Religion, to deserve the name, must rest on truth; and, as we have already seen, its dictates must be authoritative, and the ends it pro-

poses certain of attainment : otherwise, it can offer grounds only for opinion, but none for faith ; matter for speculation, but little for practice. The new views (or rather old ones revived), however, propose grounds very different from these : they positively deny the authority which we have been urging as necessary for the purposes of true religion ; and at once deprive the Scriptures of their claim both to inspiration and miracle ; and then argue, irrationally, as far as we can see, that a religion claiming no higher an authority than human infirmity, is sufficient both to inform the head, and to amend the heart ; to lay claim to the faith, and to raise the hope ; and not only to make society all that it is capable of being made in a religious and moral point of view, but also to afford the assurance of a happy immortality beyond the grave. This we cannot help believing is most unreasonable to suppose ; because we know the fact, that mere morality, or even science, has never yet brought about effects like these ; and for the best possible of all reasons ; because they are not conversant with matter at all calculated to do so. The question at issue, however, rests on very different grounds. Both parties here ascribe to the Scriptures supreme authority in matters relating to religion ; and the question is : How ought these to be understood ? The Rationalist affirms, that on the orthodox view they present much that is unreasonable ; and consequently, incredible. This we have shewn is not the case. He also affirms, that on the views of the Rationalist they present nothing but what is most reasonable. This we deny : and our proofs will presently be given. We shall first, however, proceed to investigate the principles themselves, upon which these views are proposed ; and then, in the next place, to examine their application in detail, at some length.

It has already been remarked, that the system termed *Rationalism* (*Rationalismus*), is not new, although its supporters are anxious to have it believed that it is. The truth, however, is, its leading principles are to be found in the fragments still preserved of the ancient objectors to Christianity, as Porphyry, Hierocles, and others ; and, with some embellishments, in the writings of the later but equally celebrated Spinoza. For replies to the former, the ancient Apologists may be profitably consulted :—to the latter, the

divines and others of modern times.* I shall confine myself, therefore, to the consideration of some of the leading principles as proposed by the Rationalists; and, if it can be shewn that these are unsound, it will not be necessary to follow them into all their particulars; because the foundation being once sapped, the superstructure itself must necessarily fall.

One of the first principles of this school is:† That “philosophy and religion are bound together by the most necessary ties of connection; so much so, that no doctrine of any authoritative religion whatever, can be proposed to an enlightened man, with any probability of its being accepted, unless it first submit to be tried by *right reason*. And, it is added, as the improvements in science are now such as to have shaken all former merely authoritative religious notions, the study of philosophy, upon which the more modern creeds have been formed, and on which they *securely rest*, ought the most strenuously to be inculcated. Nor, it is said, will philosophy in any way injure a religion leading to a real knowledge of God; on the contrary, it is necessary for the purpose of determining what are the true fundamentals of a

* On the life and writings of this extraordinary and misguided man, see the *Bibliotheca Hebræa* of Wolfius, vol. i. p. 239, art. 378; Bayle’s *Dictionary*, tom. ix. art. *Spinoza*, edit. 1739. Clarke on the Nature and Attributes of God, *passim*. Condillac, *Traité des Systèmes*, tom. ii. chap. x. &c.

† I shall cite a book here accessible to all, namely, the “*Institutiones Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmaticæ*,” by Wegscheider, (edit. 1826), because, not only is this a book of considerable authority in Germany, but because abundant references will be found in it to other works, either in Latin or German, composed by the leading authors of this school. The passage alluded to is: “*Arctissimo cum vera philosophia vinculo theologia, si vel formam vel materiem ejus respexeris, conjuncta cernitur . . . nulla religionis alicujus positivæ doctrina homini cultiori possit probari, nisi ad sanæ rationis, sensu veri atque honesti recte imbutæ . . . tanquam ad lapidem Lydium, prius exacta fuerit. . . . Quo magis autem nostris temporibus progressu doctrinarum omnium fides auctoritatis qualiscunque concessa est, et fundamenta, quibus theologia olim superstrui solebat, labefacta sunt; eo gravius sanæ philosophiæ, quæ theologia recentior ut fundamento nititur solidissimo, studium theologiæ cultoribus commendari debet . . . Tantum verò abest, ut philosophia religioni quæ animum ad veram Dei cognitionem erigit, repugnet, ut hæc ab illa, quæ sint vera fidei religiosæ fundamenta, explicari sibi cupiat.* (§ 15, pp. 64, 5.) The following are the sentiments of Spinoza on this subject: “*Cum itaque mens nostra ex hoc solo, quod Dei naturam objective in se continet, et de eadem participiat, potentiam habet ad formandas quasdam notiones rerum naturam explicantes, et vitæ usum docentes; meritò mentis naturam, qua-*

religious faith." From these statements it will immediately be seen, what is meant to be brought about by this connection of religion with philosophy: not that philosophy should be employed as the handmaid of religion; but, on the contrary, that religion should be made entirely subservient to the purposes of philosophy; in other words, that philosophy is first to determine what is fit to be considered as religion or not, and then that the system, doctrines, &c. whatever they may be, are to be passed upon the world for the authoritative declarations of the Deity. All we can yet say is, that things wear a very suspicious aspect. We cannot pronounce such a system to be actually false, because we have not yet seen what is meant by the term philosophy. "It will appear," we are further told, "that *all religion* RESTS upon that faculty of the human mind (occasionally indeed corrupted by the allurements of the imagination), by which a man endued with *reason* and moral liberty, elevates himself above all external things, the order of the whole visible world, and the limits of time and space by which he is confined.* . . . Whence arises a *persuasion* of the truth of the ideas which belong to reli-

tenus talis conspicitur, *primam divinæ revelationis causam* statuere possumus; ea enim omnia, quæ clare, et distincte intelligimus, Dei idea (ut modo indicavimus et natura nobis dictat, non quidem verbis, sed modo longe excellentiore, et qui cum natura mentis optime convenit, ut unusquisque, qui certitudinem intellectus gustavit, apud se, sine dubio expertus est." Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, pp. 2, 3. (Edit. 1674.) And again, "Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo quia naturæ potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia, certum est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicujus causam naturalem, hoc est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus." (Ib. p. 20.) "Si concipere possemus aliquid in natura ab aliqua potentia . . . posse fieri, quod naturæ repugnet . . . id ut absurdum rejiciendum." (Ib. p. 102.)

* "Patebit, omnem religionem niti ea animi humani facultate, quamvis sensuum atque imaginationis illecebris sæpius corrupta, qua homo, ratione et libertate morali præditus, super rerum externarum totiusque mundi visibilis ordinem, *temporis* et *spatii* limitibus adstrictum, sese attollit . . . Unde persuasio ea nascitur de *idearum* ad religionem spectantium veritate, quæ *fides* dicta *religiosa rationalis* . . . Hæc *fides*, licet objecta ejus nec mathematicorum more demonstrari, nec sensibus percipi possint . . . tamen, siquidem ab efficacia proficiscitur, rectæ rationi necessario inharerent, non minore gaudet certitudine quam scientia." (Wegscheider, § 2. pp. 4, 5.) The author has here, it must be confessed, appealed to Heb. xi. 1—3, in support of this sentiment; but, as I can see no possible connection between the two writers,

gion; which *faith* is called *rational religion* This *faith*, although not capable of mathematical demonstration, nor yet evident to the senses, proceeds, nevertheless, from an efficacy necessarily inherent in reason, possessed of no less certainty than (absolute) knowledge." And again, "a *rational*, that is a *philosophical faith*, is a certain persuasion of things, exceeding the boundaries of the visible world, proceeding from the force and efficacy of ideas." The philosophy, therefore, upon which all this mighty fabric is to rest, is nothing more than a few notions obtained by the aid of science falsely so called — of science which will neither admit of demonstration, nor of being reduced to experiment; but which is, nevertheless, as certain in its deductions, as real knowledge, however obtained, can possibly be!

To such a conclusion, from such premises, I think I may say, no man in a sound state of mind could ever have come; unless, indeed, he were supposed to be ignorant of all science, mathematical, physical, and moral. But let us see whether any thing better can be discovered in favour of this system. There may still be probabilities, that some religious truth can be discovered by the efforts of the human mind. A man may come to the belief that there is a God; that He is wise, holy, just, good, omnipotent, and so on; and even, that there

I have omitted the reference in the text. Nothing, however, can be more obvious, than the agreement in sentiment and even in words discoverable in this passage is, with that just cited from Spinoza. So Spinoza again, (Ib. p. 23): "Cum simplex imaginatio non involvat ex sua natura certitudinem, sicuti omnis clara et distincta *idea*, sed imaginationi, ut de rebus, quas imaginamur, certi possimus esse, aliquid necessario accedere debeat, nempe ratiocinium," &c. I must give one passage more from Wegscheider, which is this: "Doctrina illa quum variis prematur difficultatibus, disciplinarum, imprimis historicarum, physicarum et philosophicarum progressu in dies magis magisque elucetibus, inter theologos et philosophos recentiores haud pauci exstiterunt, qui vario modo ab illa recedentes, usum rationis humanæ in rebus divinis cognoscendis et explicandis non solum *formalem*, sed etiam *materialem*, ut dicitur, admittendum esse censerent (*Rationalismus* generatim sic dictus). Prodiit inde Rationalismus proprie sic dictus, s. doctrina de necessitate religionis ideis, *per rectam rationem homini a Deo manifestatis, unice fidem habendi et*, SUMMA RATIONI AUCTORITATE VINDICATA, revelationis cujusque opinatæ supernaturalis argumentum, non nisi ad leges cogitandi agendique homini a Deo insitas exactum probandi." (Ib. pp. 39, 40.) After this, surely no doubt can remain on the mind of any, as to the primary notions of this school on this subject.

is a future state of things, with rewards and punishments prepared for the good or the bad, according to their several deeds. I will add, too, he may persuade himself that this is a fact; he may most conscientiously believe it; and even die in support of his opinions. But will all this amount to any thing like *knowledge*? The utmost surely that can be said, is, that it is an *opinion*, and one founded on some probability. But then, the same philosophy, the same soaring spirit, which in its flight mocks the boundaries of mortality, may also mock the boundaries here prescribed to it, and within a month, perhaps, come to conclusions entirely opposed to all this, viz. that God is tyrannic; that there is no such immortality, and no such future judgments as these, &c.: and the fact is, thousands have so veered about in their notions. Millions have held, and do now hold, all these and a thousand other such ungrounded opinions, notwithstanding all the force, efficacy, and so on, of these exalted and heaven-born ideas. If, then, we have not demonstration in favour of this system; we have at least experiment against it: and the best modern philosophers have, with all the advantages of discovery, determined, that experiment is the safest test of truth in every case. What then are we to think of a religion built upon such a philosophy as this? What of the man, or set of men, who can be so blind as to adopt it for one moment, when consequences so truly awful are depending thereon? But, I may be told, as this writer with others of his school frequently tell us, that Christianity has not yet under any shape produced unanimity: * that men change their notions as often under its most favourite form, as they ever did under the teaching of the philosophers. I answer: This fact may be indisputable, without at all affecting our question. Christianity forces the will of no man, as already observed; it only addresses the understanding, taking for granted, that men will duly cultivate that; not by filling the head with vain and ungrounded notions, but by studying things as

* “Inter eos ipsos, qui eandem revelationem sequi se professi sunt, magna opinionum diversitas obtinuit; nec illa revelationis auctoritas impedire potuit, quo minus ejus asseclæ ad superstitionem erroresque alios non modo ineptos, sed etiam perniciosos, delaberentur. Quodsi vero Deo placuisset, omnes idem prorsus sentire de rebus divinis, certe sapientissimis præsidii id effecturus fuisset.” (Ib. p. 42.)

they are ; by coming to facts tangible and intelligible ; and by estimating these as to their effects and consequences by the just deductions of experimental knowledge. If after all they err, the fault will not be in the system of Christianity, but in the men ; for it will be difficult, if not impossible, to conceive any thing easier to be understood, than the essentials of Christianity rightly interpreted are, as our author frequently allows. There is, besides, a most glaring error in the reasoning here proposed : it takes for granted the thing to be proved ; and involves, to all intents and purposes, a *petitio principii*. For how, it may be asked, is it to be known, that any one can by abstraction, reasoning, or any earthly way whatever, arrive at a certainty as to religious truths ? Or, further, How can any one affirm, that the conclusions he may thus have arrived at are such truths ? Where, I ask, is the test of their truth to be found ? The utmost, surely, that can be said must be, that such believe that they have made this acquisition ; but then, every Jacob Behmen, every mystic, every pretender, may believe or affect to believe, the same ; but will any reasonable man assert that such a belief, or pretence to belief, can be cited as sufficient to put an end to all further inquiry ? Surely not. The conclusion he will come to must be, I think, that such assurances are mere assumptions, and *may* be nothing more than gross instances of *perverted reason*, well calculated to mislead and to deceive. We are told by our author in another place, that this sort of *rationalism* is the great panacea for curing all sorts of error and mysticism.* I greatly doubt this ; for it

* “ Usus ejus (*i. e.* theologiæ rationalis) multiplex . . . ex analogia cujusque disciplinæ, quæ, ut ordine certo exponatur, ad notiones et enuntiationes universales revocari debet : *denique*, ex ævi nostri ingenio, partim *mysticismum* et *misologiam* quandam præ se ferentis, obsoletarumque opinionum patrocini-
nium affectantis, partim novum quendam *Gnosticisum* et *Scholasticisum* tuentis ; partim Syncretismo, adeoque *Cryptocatholicismo* indulgentis ; quæ vitia non nisi rationali theologia bene explorata atque stabilita evitari possunt, siquidem ea recte cognita sola veram exhibet normam, ad quem quævis religio positiva et singulæ ejus partes exigi ac judicari debent.” (*Ib.* p. 73.) I will only remark, that all the errors here alluded to, can be very well met without the aid of German rationalism ; because Christianity, long before the days of either Spinoza or Dr. Wegscheider, had recourse to the aid of reason, both in recommending and in defending the truth. In another place (p. 59), Luther is cited as an advocate for this rationalism ; but the truth is, Luther’s rationalism went no farther than to employ right reason in recom-

may be true, that upon this, as a principle, mysticism of every sort has been founded; and, as far at least as my information goes, this is the fact. Mysticism, as every one knows, judges of its own privileges solely by its own convictions, whether those arise only from natural feelings, erroneous views of the Scriptures, a superstitious education, or all these combined. And nothing more, as far as I can discover, is appealed to by this highly enlightened and favoured school. I will allow, they are in the habit of adorning their idol with the titles of *right* reason, *rightly* informed views, *sound* deduction,* &c. &c.: but what will all this amount to, farther than the fact, that they have been pleased so to grace their groundless theories, notions, and deductions? With words we have here nothing to do; all we are concerned about is, What is the thing meant? And, I think it must be confessed, that it deserves nothing better than the appellation of groundless and irrational theory.

But further: If true religion rise no higher than the deductions of mere abstraction, or reasonings, it may be, about the aptness or fitness of things, it may be asked, In what respect does it differ in principle from heathenism? What these enlightened men will say to this question, I know not; but sure I am, that no difference whatever can be pointed out: and, that they can discover none, may, perhaps, be inferred from the frequency of their appeals to the heathen philosophers, in support of their sentiments.† I will, however, venture a step further, and affirm that this, and this alone, is the leading principle of heathenism. The facts

mending and defending revealed religion; not in arguing, that human reason was the only source from which true religion could be derived. Luther, therefore, was *reasonable*, but not a Rationalist.

* Nothing can be more truly ridiculous than some of the assertions occasionally made on this subject: take, for example, the note (a) at page 42. "Nam rationem, quatenus suprema ejus vis cernatur in *ideis* concipiendis eademque ipsa recte dicatur *idea*, homini a Deo datam esse facultatem non exultam, sed assidue excolendam constat, ejusque aciem, non nisi adjuvantibus rebus faustissimis a Dei providentia repetendis, *ita curari posse, ut ne praestringatur erroribus.*" I think I may affirm, that the man capable of receiving doctrines like these, must be in a state of mind admirably adapted for the reception of every sort of nonsense and mysticism, that may be brought before him.

† This is obvious from almost every page of their works; but they actually go much farther. They affirm that Judaism, *i. e.* the religion of the

upon which the philosophers built, confessedly came from another quarter; but the reasoning was all their own. Those facts can easily be traced to the Bible: * the reasoning, such as it is (and it is precisely of the same sort with that adopted by this enlightened school), is certainly their own; and its object was, just like that of our favoured divines, to reduce to the common operations of nature and of reason, these facts, which had been taken as matters of faith by their more wise, but less sophisticated, forefathers. From the abundant remains of ancient philosophy still preserved, we can have no possible doubt as to its real character. Of the vanity of its theological researches and conclusions we are not only convinced by the deductions of sound reason, but Scripture itself in the most positive terms informs us, that it was a system of error and darkness, of vice and abomination, of cruelty and woe; and yet it had the advantage of all that human reason could invent, display, recommend, or enforce. In its favour, the noblest efforts of intellect which the world ever witnessed were called forth, exhibited, and reduced to practice; and yet a few unlearned men, descended from illiterate forefathers and born in an illiterate nation, have not only condemned the system, but exposed its fallacies.† To

Jews as rightly collected from the Old Testament, contained a large admixture of paganism; and that upon this Christianity was built, with such alterations only as the spirit of the times called for. “*Nihilo minus ea (religio per Jesum Christum et Apostolos tradita), quippe non una eademque forma positiva a singulis ejus auctoribus et tradita et sancita, ingenio seculi, quo primum innotuit, Judaicisque opinionum commentis accommodata, et mythis . . . traditionibusque implicata fuit, omnique tempore a genio seculi variisque eam fingendi conatibus pependit.*” (*Ib.* p. 53.) A first draught of all this will be found in Spinoza, pp. 37, 53, 58, 81, 89, 90, 136, &c.

* In pp. 21, 22, we have a note on the probable origin of monotheism, &c. The fact appears to be, that a belief in *one supreme Deity* was universal among the ancient heathens; and it certainly is so now wherever heathenism prevails. Besides, all the primary facts upon which heathenism is built are clearly the facts of the Bible; which is easily enough accounted for, because the Bible exhibits, beyond all question, the older documents: all the rest is the work of pure rationalism. See Van Dale de Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ, and my Observations on the Origin of Heathenism, &c. in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature. See also Lactantius de Origine Erroris, &c.; Arnobius adversus Gentes; Justin Martyr; Clemens Alexandrinus, and the ancient apologists generally.

† See the quotation from Theodoret at the end of this work.

the soundness of their conclusions, the excellency of their morality, and the undeviating tenor of their exemplary lives, even the philosophers of Germany afford their testimony. Now, I may ask, Is it not marvellous that these unscientific men should, without the aids of philosophy, abstraction, &c. have arrived at conclusions of this sublime and overpowering nature? How has it possibly come to pass, that the fisherman Peter, the tent-making and Judaizing Paul, the meek and mild-hearted John, who could scarcely write Greek, have conspired to recommend such truths, morality, faith, and heavenly-mindedness, as Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, and the rest of this dazzling cohort, never thought of? But this is not all; they actually set up for reformers and controversialists; and, what is still more marvellous, they succeeded; for we find, both in the court of the Arcopagus and of the Cæsars, some of the able and pious partisans of these poor and illiterate men. We are told, however, that, after all, they were philosophers, and so were all the prophets. The only difference discoverable between these and people generally was, that they had more fervour, more moral feeling, poetical zeal, and so on: * and the same was the case with the philosophers of Greece and Rome. If this

* “Atque hæc revelationis opinio (*i. e.* supernaturalis), cui sæpissime adjunctum fuit de certa *theocratia* commentum, multis modis hominibus profuit, sive ad res publicas constituendas legibusque vinciendas, sive ad notionem officiorum propagandam; siquidem ratio humana sine institutionis alienæ et auctoritatis externæ beneficio vix satis excoli posse videtur.” (Weg. p. 27.) For the purpose of recommending this notion, on the origin and authority of the Hebrew polity, we have a citation from Diodorus Siculus, shewing that Minos made some such claim, in order to recommend his laws to the people of Crete; Mneuis, to recommend his to the Egyptians; Lycurgus, his to the Lacedæmonians, and so of others: and the inference to be made is, that just as much reliance may be placed upon the one as the other. And again: “Quemadmodum Judæi, æque ut aliæ præcæ gentes, *efficaciam virium animo a natura insitarum* haud probe dignoscentes, animi motus sensusque acriores atque insolitos et cogitationes subito menti injectas a quodam numinis afflatu, s. inspiratione . . . repetebant: ita illi jam inde a secundo ante Christum natum seculo, ad scripta sua sacra inspirationis opinionem transtulerunt,” &c. Then, in order to identify the whole with pure heathenism, we have in the note (a), “Apud Græcos et Romanos poetæ, vates, philosophi, et alii divino quodam afflatu vel numine ipso hominem penitus occupante excitari dicebantur, quod respondet Hebraico רוח יהוה היה על- Ezech. i. 5, et יד יהוה היה על- i. 3, iii. 14, 22, (πνευματοφόρος apud LXX. Hos. ix. 8, φερόμενος ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου. 2 Pet. i. 21). Hinc Θεοδιδάκτοι, Θεοφόροι, &c.

was the fact, I should like to be informed how it came to pass, that these prophets, philosophers, &c. never had philosophy enough to find this out? How could they possibly have been so blind, as never to have discovered that they were carrying on only a war of words? There certainly was no want of opportunity: and, the fact is, notwithstanding all these favourable circumstances, both parties deliberately declared, that light and darkness were not more opposed to one another, than these systems were, both in principle and in effect.

We have, therefore, the most positive testimonies of the sacred writers, on subjects which they must have understood, that "the world by wisdom knew not God"—that they had not even *retained* the knowledge of him which they once had possessed; but had become darkened in their understandings, and their foolish hearts hardened. And what, let me ask, have we now opposed to all this? Has any new knowledge on this interesting subject been discovered? Has modern science made out any thing explanatory? No such thing: the fact only is, that a number of gentlemen, who call themselves philosophers, have trumped up an old and exploded system of pure infidelity; and, upon the strength of it, they persist in affirming that revealed religion cannot be credited, because *philosophy*, i. e. *philosophical ideas*, assure them, convince them, and confirm them in this conviction, that the *facts* of the case were far otherwise; and that all who do not like this conclusion, they believe themselves justified in pronouncing *the friends of darkness*.* I will only remark, that all this may be very convincing to some

... divino numine afflati, inspirati, furentes, &c. appellati sunt," *ib.* p. 147: all of which may be found, delivered in words not very different, in the first, second, and third chapters of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of the notorious Spinoza.

* "Neque vero dubitari potest, quin in rebus gravissimis, quæ ad religionem et honestatem tuendam pertinent, itemque in præceptis artis logicæ, omnes philosophorum scholæ mirifice inter se convenient; et inter ipsos scriptores sic dictos profanos, quos injuste aversantur ac calumniantur tenebrarum patroni." *Ib.* p. 42. Perhaps we may take for granted, that Paul the Apostle was quite as well acquainted with the philosophers and profane authors of the heathen world as Dr. Wegscheider, or any of his school, may now be: the following is his unqualified testimony respecting them: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were

minds, and may appear to be very enlightened and liberal to others ; but to mine it seems to be destitute of every thing that deserves the name of science, philosophy, or reason. If this is *Rationalism*, I can only say, it certainly has nothing reasonable in it — nothing scientific, enlightened, or liberal to recommend it. I shall now leave this first principle, believing I have said quite enough about it, and proceed to consider another position, namely, That a connection with philosophy is most necessary for the welfare of religion.

SECTION II.

ON THE CONNECTION OF PHILOSOPHY WITH RELIGION.

FROM what has already been advanced, I think it must be plain, that I have nothing whatever to urge against the legitimate use of right reason, good philosophy, and real science, in questions relating to religion ; but, I do think, and I believe I have shewn, that there are points in which reason, philosophy, and science, can determine nothing ; I mean in questions where these cannot be legitimately applied. Reason, for example, cannot act where it has no data to act upon ; philosophy can obtain no result where there is no subject matter ; nor can science make any observation upon things with which it is not conversant. To apply this : The fundamentals of religion are conversant about the will of the Deity, provisions for the soul, another state of being, and the like. On these subjects, I say, neither reason, philosophy, nor

thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was hardened. *Professing themselves to be wise*, they became fools ; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves :” and so on to the end of the chapter. (Rom. i. 21, &c.) But, the truth of this testimony can be abundantly proved from the profane authors themselves, as Mr. Wegscheider ought to have known. Paul, therefore, if he was a *friend of darkness*, certainly was not a friend of falsehood ; but there is no reason whatever for supposing either, if we except the waking dreams of rationalism. That heathenism was a mere corruption of revealed religion, may justly be inferred from St. Paul’s words just cited.

science, can afford us any real *knowledge*. All they can advance must originate in conjecture, and can amount only to low probabilities. Such probabilities alone, particularly if they be in some respects discordant (and this has always been the case), can lay claim to the faith of no one. Reason and science can indeed judge of religion, when that has once been made known, and this they ought to do; but they can go no farther—they can never rise to the question of its first facts: these must necessarily be derived from a higher source. Besides, elements as such, as it is the case in every science, can never be reduced to the scrutiny of human reason. They are data, upon which reason may and ought to act; but which it can never analyse, much less prescribe in the first instance.

Now, the elements proposed by the sacred writers are exactly of the sort just described; they go to points on which we have no knowledge; and on which, consequently, we can offer no opinion. They are, nevertheless, in strict analogy with the rest of the operations of the Deity, which indeed the sacred writers teach, and which reason can abundantly attest. Every subsequent particular, as, the exalted character of God, his dealings with men, the morality inculcated, and the faith urged, are such as to be fit matter for the exercise of reason, of fear, of gratitude, and of love. These will afford a scope for the reasonable soul, in all respects worthy of its high character and destinies; and while they forbid inquiry into its secrets, and into which inquiry has always proved useless, they invite and encourage the most sedulous, scientific, and rigid investigation of all those its parts, which can properly fall under the observation of the limited powers of man. So far, then, the connection of learning with religion is legitimate and praiseworthy; and very greatly it is to be regretted, that so little real learning is at this day bestowed upon it. But when we come to assert, that reason must regulate its elements, its facts, and what in every science must be taken as postulates; we make a demand as unreasonable as it is unusual, and as absurd as it is impossible in the nature of things to satisfy, and evince a disposition as destitute of candour and of knowledge, as it is arrogant, foolish, and presuming.

But sound reason, real philosophy, and great human

learning, may most advantageously be employed in vindicating revealed religion, and in rescuing it from the encumbrances of science falsely so called. And this, I hold, is its most important and useful office. Ignorance cannot be expected to be equal to this task. Without the exercise of reason and knowledge, therefore, the church of Christ must ever have been subject to impositions the most glaring. Science falsely so called has always been anxious for innovation; and the history of the church abundantly shews, that this has ever been its direst foe, whether it came recommended in the garb of philosophy,* or in the disguise of mysticism, presumed inspiration, or vaunting libertinism. It has been shewn, I think, that the claim of our enlightened divines comes under one, at least, of these descriptions of deceivers, whatever they may think of the matter; it being evident to demonstration, that their *rationalism* is grounded on error and conceit; and that, instead of remedying the evils it complains of, it is, in reality, the very source from which they spring.

From the first principle of rationalism, as here developed, we can readily enough perceive how the rest of the system is likely to work: if, for example, the barrier has once been broken down which distinguishes true religion from heathen philosophy, and that done too in a manner which sets reason and analogy at defiance; we need not be at a loss to suppose that,

* Ancient, as well as modern times, have suffered greatly from these *ἐκ τριέωνος φιλόσοφοι*, who were well designated by our Lord as being wolves in sheep's clothing, or, as Darwin has admirably paraphrased it, "wolves in wool." It is a curious fact, that several of the philosophers who came over to the Christian cause in the first ages of the church, continued to wear the *τρίεων* or *τριεώνιον*, i. e. a coarse hairy sort of cloak, in order, as it should seem, to point out their great learning and humility. The Soofees of Persia, a well-known sect of mystics, continue so to clothe themselves to this very day; and they thence style themselves the *اهل تصوف*, *people of wool*. Nothing can be more suitable than the remarks of Irenæus on the philosophers of his days, whom he termed heretics, with reference to this fact. "Ἰνα οὖν μὴ τὴν ἡμετέραν αἰτίαν συναρπάζωνται τινες, ὡς πρόβατα ὑπὸ λύκων, ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτοὺς διὰ τὴν ἕξωδεν τῆς προβαταίου δορᾶς ἐπιβουλήν (*lege ἐπιβολήν*), οὓς φυλλάσσειν παρήγγειλεν ἡμῖν Κύριος, ὅμοια μὲν λαλοῦντες, ἀνόμοια δὲ φρονοῦντες. "Igitur ne forte et cum nostro delicto abripiantur quidam quasi oves à lupis, ignorantes eos propter exterius ovilis pellis superindumentum, à quibus cavere denunciavit nobis Dominus, *similia quidem nobis loquentes, dissimilia vero sentientes.*" *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. i. Præf. (Grabbe's edit. pp. 2, 3.)

should equal violence be thought necessary to recommend the delusion, it would also be had recourse to. The only instance we shall now notice, as connected with our question, is the manner in which the doctrine of miracles has been treated. We have already shewn the *possibility*, *probability*, and even *necessity*, of miraculous interposition, in questions relating to true religion: we shall now offer a few remarks on the principles by which this doctrine is attempted to be set aside. That the scriptural writers advance the doctrine of miraculous interposition, it is not denied; but then, it is argued, that, as they did not understand much about natural philosophy, they have termed events *miracles* which do not deserve that distinction; and it is then affirmed, that although we may believe their general statements of facts, we need not fall in with their philosophy respecting these, for the plain reason that they were no philosophers.*

I answer: If the sacred writers have really made mistakes of this kind, it is highly proper that these should be pointed out: and that any one doing so will deserve the thanks of mankind. But it strikes me, that we must have some error here. I find events recorded by the sacred writers termed miracles, which, if their statements are true, must be *really*

* “Disputationibus recentiore ætate hac de re motis maxime effectum est, ut hoc argumentum aut diversa forma a nonnullis exponeretur, aut, variis quidem rationibus in dubium vocatum, haud paucis improbandum videretur. Ceterum ex ea persuasionem, quam quis hac de re susceperit, omne inter *supernaturalismum* et *rationalismum* discrimen ita pendet, ut, qui illum tenet, religionis Judaicæ et Christianæ origines a *miraculis* proprie sic dictis repetat; hunc qui sequitur, *sine ejusmodi miraculis*, Deo quidem providente, *illas patefactas esse statuat.*” (Wegsch. p. 179.) And again: “Præterquam quod doctrinæ illi de *miraculis* scholasticæ repugnat tum indoles mentis humanæ, *certissimis experientie legibus necessario adstricta*, nec certas indubitasque efficacæ supernaturalis notas discernens, tum ipsa *idea Dei recte informata*; haud minus eidem adversatur *historia populi cujusque inculti, et eo ipso ad prodigia fingenda et credenda proclivioris*, *miraculis* referta, quæ *artium et doctrinarum progressu et causarum intermediarum cognitione amplificata evanescent*; quemadmodum spectra et larvas evanuisse videmus, ex quo tempore homines ea vel fingere vel credere desierunt . . . ejusmodi *miracula*, quamvis ævo rudiore a *supernaturali* et *immediata* Dei operatione repeterentur, *e simplici tamen naturali rerum ordine, Deo moderante, prodiiisse, jam dubitare non licet.*” (p. 181, &c.) Here, I say, we recognise the operation of the principle with which we set out; namely, a determination to pronounce every thing incredible which falls not in with a certain set of notions; and then to advance the old argument,—viz. *human reason rightly informed*, (without

what they are said to be—miraculous. The history, for example, of the deliverance from Egypt, consists of a succession of events, every one of which must be miraculous, at least. I know very well, that attempts have been made to explain their miraculous character away; such, for instance, as this: Because the magicians withstood Moses, and actually imitated some of his miracles, it must follow, that so far these acts were not miraculous. In this case, I shall not think it necessary at all to dwell on the probability, that all these efforts were the effects of juggling, imposition, or any thing of the sort, which I may very well do; I will only insist upon the fact that, by their own shewing, they were finally unable to compete with their opponent. In like manner, the passage of the Red Sea has been attempted to be explained, by the circumstance that the winds and tides conspire, at certain seasons, so as to leave a certain part of this sea without water. If, however, this was the case, how are we to account for the circumstance of the Egyptian hosts being drowned? Is it probable that Pharaoh and his generals were ignorant of this? It is no difficult matter to imagine, that the Israelites might have been ignorant of the phenomenon, because their confined circumstances were unfriendly to the acquirement of

saying in what this information consists,) determines otherwise. We next have a very dazzling tirade about the *ignorance of ancient times*, and the improved state of knowledge, *exclusively possessed by this all-comprehending school*. And then sentence is pronounced; which is at least a *summary*, if not a very *scientific*, mode of proceeding. We have, however, some reasons rendered in the notes. On one occasion, Cicero on Divination is quoted to shew that, the cause of whatever happens is to be looked for in nature; and, on another, to recommend the sentiment, that “it is not the business of the philosopher to trust to *testimony*, but to shew how any thing may have happened by reason and argument.” Truly this is very enlightened doctrine: it is a wonder, surely, that our courts of justice have not adopted it! In another note, a list of false miracles is appealed to, as found in heathen histories; whence, I suppose, it is to be inferred, that because something has been false, nothing can be true! We are also told, in the text (p. 182), that a belief in supernatural miracles must be injurious to the cause of virtue, and even break in upon the sanctity of the Divine law. And for proof of this, we are referred to the absurd philosophy of Kant; as if common sense were not sufficient to determine the absurdity of such a position. After this, the doctrine of prophecy is attacked and demolished, with as much ease as any sentence of condemnation can possibly be pronounced: but, as no arguments at all better than those just noticed are adduced, I must be allowed to pass over them.

such knowledge; yet they passed these depths in safety, while Pharaoh and his host attempting to do so were all drowned! In the next place, we have a residence of forty years in the deserts of Arabia; and are assured that, during this time, the Israelites were miraculously fed with manna and quails. But it is urged, by way of interpretation, The manna is still found, and so are the quails, in those parts. I answer: The first of these statements is not true.* The manna now found is a thing totally different from that described by Moses; and, as to the second, although quails are still found on the coasts of the Red Sea, they are never found in the heart of the desert, where the Israelites must have sojourned during a great part of their time; and no where in any thing like the abundance said to have taken place on that occasion. Nor would any one, either at this or any former day, have undertaken to support an army of six hundred thousand men, upon the strength of any such supposition as that here resorted to by this philosophical school of divines; the man would be treated—and well he might—as a madman and a fool, who should think of doing so: and yet we find Moses actually leading the Israelites into that situation; and, what is the most striking, attesting to their faces,—what indeed the nation has ever since believed,—that they were thus supported; and even that their garments waxed not old, nor did the foot of one of them swell, during this protracted and remarkable period. Now, I think, we may safely affirm, that whatever else modern philosophy may have discovered, it certainly has not afforded us information sufficient to justify the conclusion, that in all this there was no miracle; if, indeed, it has, let it, for the sake of truth, be brought forward. Hitherto, however, no such statement has been made, at least as far as I know; and, until it shall be made, I must be allowed to maintain, that these, and similar events related by the sacred writers, are *miracles* in the true sense of that term. Of the attempts made to explain them away, however well intentioned they may have been, I must

* This, with several other such groundless and silly statements, has lately been brought forward in a very inviting and popular form, in a work entitled "The History of the Jews," by the celebrated Professor of Poetry at Oxford. It is greatly to be regretted, that learned and poetical geniuses do not take a little pains to make themselves better informed on these subjects.

affirm, that to reason, science, or philosophy, they can lay no claim whatsoever, and that these absolutely refuse them every species of support; nor, further, will they receive the smallest countenance from the poorest probability imaginable. But it is insinuated, that the heathen also laid claim to the operation of miracles: and these every one knows are not to be believed; and consequently, by parity of reason, those of the Jews ought not to be credited. That is to say: If one man should be guilty of uttering a falsehood, however notorious his propensity to lying might be, and however apparent the object he might have in view, I am for ever bound to believe no other man, under any circumstances whatever! This, I think, contains the principle, and perhaps not a bad illustration, of the case alluded to; and, as the absurdity of the conclusion aimed at cannot but be sufficiently apparent, it will be unnecessary I should point it out.

With this before me, I think I may affirm, that the full authority of the Scripture stands untouched and undiminished, in all the lustre of its primitive simplicity and strength; that it stands on a rock which no human efforts have hitherto shaken,—on an authority which nothing mortal has affected or injured. The facts which it appeals to are not more extraordinary than reason requires they should be, in order to make good the claim advanced to a divine origin: the claim, too, is itself only such as every document professing to afford real and authoritative religious information must necessarily make.

Enough, perhaps, has been said on this subject to shew, that wherever the truth is to be found, it is not to be expected in the writings of the *rationalists* of modern Germany; because, the principles on which their system rests are manifestly false. A few instances of their methods of interpreting the Scriptures have already been noticed: I shall now advert to one, which, as it appears to carry with it very great learning, and is, besides, extremely fashionable, deserves some consideration. It has been laid down by our great Pococke, Lightfoot, and others, that Rabbinical and Oriental literature may be made subservient to the just interpretation of Holy Scripture: that is, the customs, modes of expression, grammar, and even single words, which were in use during the times of the scriptural writers, are still to be met with in the

East and in eastern literature. When, therefore, these can be brought to bear upon the Scripture, without disturbing its context and spirit, they may with propriety be appealed to. Others, too, among whom Grotius and Bochart may be named as the most successful writers, have even had recourse to the literature of heathen Greece and Rome. Our rationalists, as it will presently be seen, avail themselves of these aids, but apply them to an extent, and for purposes, never dreamt of by these excellent men: they will cite authors of the kind alluded to, not merely for the purpose of solving philological difficulties, but of confirming their own sentiments and results. A Jewish cabbalist, for example, a heathen philosopher, a Jewish Targumist, an heretical Christian, or the author of a spurious gospel, is not cited in order to illustrate the construction of a sentence, the meaning of a word or phrase found in a gospel, or any other book of Scripture; but to determine its origin, meaning, intent, scope; not to act as an assistant, but as an authoritative interpreter. Quotations are then made from some of these precious relics of antiquity with a liberal and learned hand; and the immensity of reading, research, and learning,—which last, however, is not always to be implicitly relied upon,—are made to supply the place of genuine investigation, and to awe into agreement and error, all who may not possess either acuteness or learning sufficient to detect and expose the fallacy. These positions I shall now proceed to illustrate and confirm by a few extracts taken from the *Christologia Judæorum* of Bertholdt,* and some other works which have

* The following is the account given by this author of the materials from which he intended to draw his illustrations and proofs: “In numero *fontium primariorum* habeantur *libri canonis Hebraici seniores*, imprimis *propheticæ, Apocrypha Veteris Testamenti, Philonis Alexandrini et Flavii Josephi opera*, *Novi Fœderis libri*, quibus multa a Judæis ingenio suo nativo convenienter prolata et a Jesu ejusque Apostolis, præcipue Johanne Apocalypseos auctore, *Christologiæ Judaicæ congruenter et adcommode dicta insunt*, nec non nonnulla e *Pseudepigraphis Veteris Testamenti*, præcipue liber iste, qui sub nomine *libri iv. Esdræ* circumfertur. Accedunt denique, quibus auctoritatem *fontium secundariorum* adjungimus, *libri Rabbinorum antiquiorum*, imprimis liber *SOHAR*, utpote qui *Christologiam Judæorum sublimiorem continet*, neque tamen senioribus, veluti libro *Nezach Israel*,¹ qui syllogen vel conge-

¹ This too is a work of the same stamp, compiled from the Gemara and Allegorical Commentaries. (See Wolfii Bib. Heb. vol. i. p. 420. art. 700. n. 8.)

obtained currency in Germany, and which may therefore be considered as approved specimens of scriptural interpretation of this sort.

SECTION III.

ON BERTHOLDT'S CHRISTOLOGIA JUDÆORUM.

THE leading principle upon which this work proceeds is that which has been termed "The historical interpretation of the New Testament;" and which Ernesti, Keil, Morus, and even our own Lightfoot, have recommended as of very great value. "I chose," says our author, "to treat on the Christology of the Jews (which prevailed) during the times of Jesus and his Apostles. And, I suppose, there is no one who will disapprove of (my) reason for doing so; for I entertain no fear that, of those who are truly imbued with a knowledge of theology, so much as one will hesitate (to allow), that from a right and sound knowledge of this matter (which, indeed, from the second century before Christ, if it did not entirely swallow up, did certainly surround as a foss and a curtain, nearly all the sacred knowledge of the Jews) will proceed the

riem omnium diversarum id argumentum concernentium sistit, prorsus neglectis, quibus cunctis tamen ita utendum erit, *ut ex iis nec quicquam adstruatur, quod non istorum librorum primi generis nobis cum maxime recensorum testimonio distinctis verbis exhibito comprobatum, vel saltem vestigiis lucidis et certis in iis depromendis præmonstratum sit.*" (Christologia Jud. Proleg. pp. 10, 11.) We have seen, in the preceding pages, how much pains has been taken to make the sacred writers talk like the heathen philosophers, classical authors, &c.; we shall here see the same thing done with regard to the Cabbalists, of which the book Zohar is, perhaps, the most splendid instance of heathenish philosophical nonsense.² We shall also have the Platonic Philo and Josephus, the apocryphal and spurious additions to the Old Testament; and then will follow a host of Rabbins, men as ignorant of the real spirit and intention of the sacred writers as any Hindu, Buddhist, or heretical Christian ever was: and, from these impure and corrupt sources, the pure doctrines and offices of the Messiah are to be ascertained, adjudged, and fixed: a lamentable specimen, indeed, of the great progress made in Biblical learning in Germany during the last half century!

² For a good account of the doctrines of the Cabbala, the second volume of Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* may be consulted, — a work of inestimable value. On the Zohar, see Wolfii *Biblioth. Heb.* vol. iii. p. 1141, art. 2175; and vol. iv. p. 1012, with the references.

historical and just interpretation of the New Testament.”* These sentiments are repeated in other places of this preface, and are frequently appealed to throughout the work; but it will not be necessary to multiply examples: we shall, therefore, now proceed, in the first place, to examine the principles here laid down.

By Christologia or Christology, Mr. Bertholdt seems to understand, the opinions held by the Jews respecting the Messiah; and which, he holds, are to be found in their Targums, Commentaries, cabbalistical, and other works, as already remarked.

Now, without attempting to depreciate any means whereby a knowledge of the contents of the New Testament may be acquired (and a recurrence to the writings of the Jews has certainly been recommended as one), I must affirm, that the plan here laid down by Mr. Bertholdt, is the least of all likely to conduct us to a real acquaintance with the contents of this book. For this reason: The New Testament professes to teach doctrines diametrically opposed to those generally held, on the subject of the Messiah, during the times of our Lord and his Apostles,—doctrines which the Jews as a body, and particularly the learned part of them, rejected to the last. As to what they held on this subject two centuries prior to this time, neither Mr. Bertholdt, nor any other person can tell: *that* part of his statement, therefore, must be set down as amounting to nothing. It may be asked, then, supposing we had the means of ascertaining the opinions of the Jews on these subjects, at the time specified, (which, however, does not appear to be the fact), is it likely that this knowledge would afford us a clue to the right understanding of the New Testament? Is it not probable, that those opinions would be more likely to lead us astray than the contrary? St. Paul declares, what indeed our Lord and the

* “Placuit de *Christologia Judæorum Jesu Apostolorumque ætate* disserere; et neminem puto fore, cui hujus consilii ratio non ex omni parte probata sit. Nam non vereor, ne eorum, qui rerum theologicarum vere gnari sunt, vel unus in eo dubius hæreat, quin a recta ac solida hujus rei, quæ inde a sæculo secundo ante Jesum natum totam pæne Judæorum doctrinam sanctam ni vel absorbit tamen vero vallo quasi fossaque circumvenit, expositione et cognitione, historica ac vera Novi Testamenti interpretatio fere omnis proficiatur.”

prophets had declared before him, that *their eyes were closed* and *their ears heavy*,—that there was a veil on their heart, just as it had been predicted,—and that blindness, in this respect at least, had happened to Israel. Under these circumstances, then, Mr. Bertholdt should, I think, have informed us, how this blindness, deafness, hardness of heart, &c. could be converted into the means of light, admonition, and life, with us; and how the truth be advanced by the mass of error which at these times confessedly prevailed. But Mr. Bertholdt explains: he says, that just as the progress of science, in the two centuries preceding the reformation, made way for that event, so did the wisdom of God attemper his Gospel to the prevailing notions, with the view of effecting a similar end; or, he prepared the Jews for its reception by thus influencing their opinions previous to its discovery. Nothing surely can be more unfortunate than this statement. Science, we are told, prepared the way for the reformation; and so the reformation took place. Providence, in like manner, prepared the Jews for the reception of the Gospel; but, alas! they never received it. The preparation failed—the Jews persevered in error: and this very system of error is now conjured up, as the only means whereby we can arrive at the truth of the Gospel!

But Mr. Bertholdt contends, that passages are to be found in these writings of the Jews, agreeing with others found in the Gospels, and calculated to throw very considerable light upon them; and not only so, but also to point out the real sources from which those in the Gospels must have been derived. I answer: This can be proved only by an induction of particulars, and of such particulars, too, as are no where to be found. In general, no book now in the hands of the Jews, if we except the Old Testament, can be shewn to be so old as the times of the Gospels;* and, if this be the case, how, it may be asked, can such proof be made out?

There is still another consideration which should not be lost sight of. The passages alluded to, generally contain glosses upon one part or other of the Hebrew Bible; but

* Some have thought, that the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are as old as these times: but this is extremely doubtful.

no independent notions were entertained by the Jews, if we except those derived from heathenism. The Gospels, however, afford the most ancient and best possible commentary on the Old Testament; and, therefore, if passages are to be found agreeing with the Gospels, it is on this account alone that they can be deemed good; but not the contrary: which would be the same thing as to argue, that because David Kimchi had, in the thirteenth century, happened to give a just interpretation of a prophecy relating to the Messiah, the Gospels which sometimes fall in with his notions, must be true, or *vice versâ*! Again; many sentiments in unison with those in the Gospels are actually found in the profane authors, and even a considerable number of facts which are common both to the Old and New Testament. Had we not, therefore, better go to these profane authors at once for the origin of both! There are rationalists, I know, who do not hesitate to do even this; and, if I am not mistaken, they are unanimous, with Spinoza, in ascribing both to the same source; namely, the fervour, zeal, piety, and what not, of well-meaning but uninspired men, as already remarked. — Let us proceed, however, to Mr. Bertholdt's work.

Mr. Bertholdt, then, in common with the most learned leaders of his school, believes that he can, by a little ratiocination, account for all the phenomena of Christianity, so as to leave no doubt whatever on the minds of any, that it is a mere system of natural religion—that it has had its periods of improvement and degradation, all of which can be fixed upon and accounted for in the most satisfactory manner. “This hope,” says he (*i. e.* that the Jews should have a Messiah who should subdue the world to their authority and rule), “if we look to its origin, took its rise from the very splendid notion of seeing better times, which had engrossed the founders of the Hebrew nation; which, men of later times, calling to mind the splendour of David's reign, confined to some one who should arise out of his house, and be endued with regal honour. This being done, they then celebrated this future king as the most excellent in regard to temper, wisdom, justice, humanity, piety, and fortitude; and hoped that, under his auspices, their commonwealth, blessed with perfect safety—their sacred rites also greatly augmented

—the nation which had been most dear to the Almighty, would for ever after enjoy the light of the golden age.”*

Here we may see with what ease the most important truths of revealed religion are set aside, and the conjectures of a rationalist made to supply their place; which, we are told again and again, we must necessarily receive, because forsooth, times are altered, and the arts and sciences are now flourishing. We have, indeed, some works referred to here in the notes, in which it is to be presumed proofs of all these assertions may be had; but the truth is, no such proofs are there to be found; and, therefore, I have not thought it worth while to mention them.

Let us now examine the grounds upon which all this stands. In the first place, then, this hope of a Messiah did not commence with the originators of the Hebrew nation; but long before that nation had either an existence or a name. We find it first spoken of in the garden of Eden; and there so defined, as to leave it scarcely possible to be misunderstood. After this, sacrifice is had recourse to, which could have had no other meaning or intention, than that of shadowing out the great work of redemption to be completed by Him. Besides, during these times, we hear nothing whatever of national glory in connection with this doctrine. The truth seems to be, it was then purely spiritual, just as that of the covenant of grace is now. No theocracy had at that time been erected: national glories were therefore foreign to the question. When, however, the theocracy had commenced, spiritual and temporal blessings were so linked together, that the one could scarcely be mentioned without some allusion being made to the other; but even in this case, the superiority of the spiritual is too apparent to allow any one, except a Jew

* “Ortum autem habuit hæc spes, si a prima repetenda sit origine, ex splendidissima, qua jam conditores gentis Hebraicæ circumfusi erant, meliorum temporum imagine, quam serioris ætatis homines, revocato ad oculos regni Davidici splendore, in personæ cujusdam, ex prosapia Davidica oriundæ et honore regio indutæ limites coegerunt. Quo facto, hunc regem futurum ingenio sapientiaque, justitia et humanitate, pietate atque fortitudine longe excellentissimum celebrarunt, atque sperarunt, fore, ut ipsius auspiciis, summa rei publicæ salute adlata, cultuque sacro maximis incrementis aucto, gens summo Numini carissima aureæ ætatis luce perpetua collustraretur.” (*Proleg.* § 2.)

or a rationalist, for a moment to doubt, what was the great scope of prophetic instruction. I know this will not satisfy Mr. Bertholdt; and that not a few among ourselves talk loudly of the obscurity of these ancient Scriptures, and think it quite sufficient to resolve all into a few probabilities, as if such an expedient could in any degree mend the matter! If, however, Holy Scripture is matter of divine revelation and of absolute authority (and this I shall contend it is and has always been), such a mode of treating it cannot be but irreverent, and partaking largely of impiety and unbelief; and just as unworthy of a Christian, as it is removed from the decisions of right reason. I shall conclude, therefore, on this head, that facts oppose the statements of Mr. Bertholdt; and, that where this is the case, conjectures, such as his are, ought to be treated as mere phantoms.

The remainder of these positions may be dispensed with, by merely affirming, that they rest on a *petitio principii*, or, take for granted the thing to be proved. Besides, as their object is to derogate from the true character of the Scriptures, which has already been shewn to be authoritative, and, without proof, to reduce them to a level with the profane authors, in common with the notorious but exploded system of Spinoza, they need not be further considered.

The next step taken by our author is to shew, that, as every thing entirely depended upon the spirit of the times during which the revelation was made, or the Hebrew nation existed, alterations are manifestly visible in the very doctrines and spirit of this religion. "Factum-est," says he, "ut inde ab exilio Babylonico successu temporis per varia rerum discrimina vicissitudinesque in nonnullis iisque præcipuis partibus magnam subiret immutationem. Causas hujus rei indagaturo facile perspectum erit et exploratum, statum rerum publicarum Judæorum post istam καταστροφήν miserum et vel per nonnulla lætiora intervalla mediocritate altius haud evectum, philosophiæ orientalis et Græco-Ægyptiæ sententias abstrusas a Judæis dogmatibus suis sacris, quantum fieri potuit, adjectas et adcommodatas, linguæ genti olim vernaculæ inscitiam et veterum librorum sacrorum rite interpretandorum imperitiam, nec non ingenii, Judæis serioribus per omnes terras populosque dispersis informati, prorsus novi et ab ingenio majorum liberaliore longe alieni singularem indolem

ad res sacras ad summas minutias redigendas effecisse, ut Jesu Apostolorumque ætate Christologia Judæorum in eam redacta esset formam, quæ ab ista, quam ante exilium Babylonicum habuit, multum abhorruit." (*Ib.* p. 8.) Again, at p. 15, we are told, that this being the fact, the Egyptian Jews, and chiefly those of Alexandria, rejecting the weak matter of their old and vulgar opinions, rose to a form of doctrine at once more beautiful and more holy: that is,—to the most perfect knowledge of a more sure and divine doctrine—to the most elevated study of virtue, and to an increase in it, by no means whatever to be repressed—thence to a felicity thus to be derived, at once more pure, and more productive of mental delights; all of which they obtained by means of allegorical interpretations, to which they were much addicted. Hence, too, they derived their notions of future rewards and punishments, &c. &c. We are next carried on to the Samaritans, then to the Jews of Palestine, and then are told, what perhaps no one will deny, that they interpreted their prophecies so as to make their Messiah a great conqueror, &c.—that they gradually acquired foreign notions, and consequently differed greatly in religious opinions, &c. &c.; after this, the particular discussions, in which all this erudite matter is to be applied, commence. I have been the more particular in this detail, for the purpose of shewing the reader, how very plausibly and inoffensively this class of divines proceeds with its matter; and how very well it is adapted to ensnare the inexperienced and unwary mind. Let us now come to the application.

Our first chapter commences with § 9, where we are told that the Jews of Palestine termed their Messiah *the Anointed* (Christ, *Χριστός*) *of God*, or *King of Israel*. They also gave him many other names, for each of which reasons may be assigned. When they had respect to his regal dignity, they called him, as was usual with other ancient people, the *Son of God*. And, in order to mark out his exclusive excellency, he was styled the *only-begotten*. With respect to his birth, he was named the *Son of David*—to his office, the *Saviour*, or *Redeemer*. With regard to his religious character and offices, he received the name of the *Prophet*. With respect to his ministerial office, and the favour he should have with God, the *King who should come in the name of the Lord*, or the *Elect and Beloved of God*. With regard to his holiness,

&c., *the holy one of God, the Pastor*. But the title of the *Son of man* had no respect either to person or thing, but was taken from Daniel's prophecy (vii. 13), where the Messiah is spoken of comparatively, &c.

I remark, in the first place, I can discover no reasonable objection to our Lord's receiving titles, in certain respects expressive of his offices, even in a divinely inspired revelation. As far as I can see, our revelation is in every respect *most reasonable*; and I think it pursues the only reasonable method, in every case, by which men, such as they are, can be treated with any prospect of success. But, suppose the Messiah had received titles bearing no relation whatever to his offices; would it not then have been objected, that these titles had been imposed in a vague and unaccountable manner; and that, therefore, the whole was unsuitable to us as reasonable beings? Mr. Bertholdt has made no formal objection on this score; he has only insinuated (which was all he could do), that, as similar titles were sometimes found among the ancient heathen, these also could claim no greater authority than was due to those.—Let us now consider the proofs.

It must be remembered, Mr. Bertholdt has purposely confined himself to Jewish books published since the captivity, in order, as he tells us, to account for the change of opinions which at that time began to take place. In his illustrations, therefore, of the title *Christ* or *Messiah*, he has cited nothing older than the fourth book of Esdras. But why, it may be asked, has Mr. Bertholdt excluded the title *Shiloh*; which, however it may be explained by us, has, as the oldest Jewish documents in our hands will shew, been always understood to relate to the Messiah? *e. g.* Gen. xlix. 10. עַד בִּיָּבֹא שִׁילֹה, which is thus paraphrased by Onkelos, עַד דִּיִּתֵּי מְשִׁיחָא, *until the Messiah come*. To the same effect are the Targums of the pseudo-Jonathan and of Jerusalem. It is true, we have no document explaining this passage so old as the Babylonish captivity; still, we have every reason for believing, that the sense here given was that held by the Jews respecting this passage, in times much older than those of the captivity. To this, many other passages occurring even in the Pentateuch may be added, a few only of which I shall now notice: and first, Gen. iii. 15. “*And thou shalt bruise his heel*,” which is explained both by the pseudo-Jonathan and the Targum of Jerusalem, as referring to an event

to come to pass in the days of the Messiah. All the passages of this sort occurring in the Old Testament, may be seen in the Chaldee, Talmudic, and Rabbinic Lexicon of Buxtorf, col. 1268, &c. Of these, however, Mr. Bertholdt has prudently taken no notice.

Again, Num. xxiv. 17, “*There shall a STAR come out of Jacob,*” &c., which both Onkelos and the pseudo-Jonathan interpret of the Messiah. Again, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, we have this remarkable passage, given as part of the last words of David: מֹנֶשֶׁל בְּאֶדָם צְדִיק מֹנֶשֶׁל יִרְאֵת יְהוָה, translated thus in our authorised version: “He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of the Lord:” but by the Targumist: “*He said that he would set one up King, who is the Messiah, who shall arise, and rule in the fear of the Lord;*” which appears to me to be fully justified by the following context: “*And he shall be as the light when the sun,*” &c. It will be observed, that very considerable additions are here made to the words of the original text, in our version; and which I think cannot be defended: *He that, must be, &c.*; not to insist on the position into which these supernumerary words throw the rest of the context. I would render the passage thus: *A righteous (one) shall govern among men: he shall govern (in) the fear of the Lord.* The Septuagint has the following: Εἶπον ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, Πῶς κραταιώσῃτε φόβον Χριστοῦ; *I said of man, How will ye retain the fear of Christ?* Another reading gives Κυρίου, *of the Lord.* The Syriac has ܡܢܫܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܡܢܫܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܡܢܫܐ, where we have a manifest error in ܡܢܫܐ and ܕܡܢܫܐ put in the plural number, when the context, no less than the original, requires the singular. The translation will then be: “*That the Just (one shall) rule among men, that he shall rule in the fear of God.*” If, therefore, any reliance can be placed upon these considerations, this is also a prediction relating to the Messiah; and, that it is so, I certainly have no doubt. The allusion to the sun may serve to identify it with the passage just cited from Numbers; and, when we read in the prophet Malachi (iv. 2), “*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise,*” &c. which is scarcely any thing more than a paraphrase upon this passage, I think a doubt cannot remain on the subject. Here, then, we have as splendid a prediction of the Messiah’s kingdom as any to

be found in the Old Testament ; and, let it be remembered, this was uttered a considerable time before the Babylonish captivity. But, as before, this mode of considering the context will not suit the purposes of Mr. Bertholdt.

Again, in Isaiah (iv. 2) : “ *In that day shall THE BRANCH of Jehovah be beautiful,*” &c. ; which, when compared with Jeremiah, xxiii. 5,—“ *I will raise unto David a RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, and a king shall reign and prosper,*” &c.—“ *In his days Judah shall be saved,*” &c.,—can leave no doubt on the mind of any candid man that the Messiah must be meant : and in this sense the Targumist has taken both these passages. Again, Isaiah, vii. 14 : “ *Behold the virgin shall conceive,*” &c., which St. Matthew has applied to Christ ; and *ib.* ix. 6 : “ *For unto us a child is born,*” &c., which the Targumist has also applied to the Messiah, cannot perhaps be subtracted from the passages which speak of Christ before the captivity.

The most remarkable prophecy, perhaps, in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, is that contained in the 53d chapter of Isaiah ; but of this, Mr. Bertholdt, with the rest of his school, easily disposes : first, by denying the genuineness of all the prophecies ascribed to Isaiah from the 40th chapter to the end ; and, secondly, by explaining away the obvious sense of this, in particular. Mr. Bertholdt, however, refers us here to a work by J. D. Kruiger, entitled “ *Commentatio de verosimillima oraculi Jes. lii. 13. sqq. et liiii. interpretandi ratione;*” but, as I have not access to this book, I must take my materials from others to which I have ; and these are, the Scholia of Rosenmüller, and the German Commentary on Isaiah by Dr. Gesenius : and, as these are highly accredited works with the rationalists, no objection will be made to their authority. To begin with Mr. Rosenmüller : “ That part of the book,” says he, “ which runs on from the 40th chapter, manifestly argues a writer who lived in Judea, after the city of Jerusalem had been burnt by the Chaldeans, and the Jewish commonwealth had been overturned. For neither does he predict those most grievous calamities as future, but mourns for them as present ;* and that, not as a prophet, to whose mind future

* Dr. Gesenius has the same argument in his Commentary (Zweyter Theil, p. 163) on chap. liii.

things are held out as present, but as one who resided in a ruined land, and passed his time in the midst of the ruins of cities. For who, I ask," continues he, "could write such things as these, unless he saw before him the Temple broken down and subverted (viz.),—*'Thy holy cities are a solitude, Zion is a solitude, Jerusalem is desolate; our holy house, and our glory, where our forefathers praised thee, he hath burnt with fire, and all our desirable places are given up to devastation.'*" (Is. lxiv. 10, 11: I have here translated Rosenmüller's Latin version:) He goes on to tell us, that many more things occur in this part of the book, which manifestly betray a writer who flourished about the end of the Babylonish captivity, who not only hopes that the destruction of the Babylonian empire is drawing nigh, but he is persuaded of it, &c. He then adds: "Now, who does not see, that predictions which describe the imminent destruction of Babylon, or which hold out liberty and a new commonwealth to the exiles, could scarcely be of any use or profit if made known to those Jews who still resided in their own country in peace and quietness, and fearless of any captivity whatever. For to such, they would have been either obscure, prefiguring as they did some future state of things, or useless; nor yet adapted to give consolation, for then they wanted no such thing," &c. This extract contains the principal arguments advanced by this school to shew, that the last twenty-six chapters could not have been written by the person who wrote the first thirty-nine of this book. Let us now consider all this. In the first place, then, all prophecy is uttered in the Hebrew, and all the oriental languages of this family, either in the present or past tense of the verbs: for this obvious reason; because they possess no other, or future, tense. For the most part, however, prophecy is uttered in *the past tense*;* for the purpose, as the oriental grammarians

* See my Hebrew Grammar, p. 352. And so Justin Martyr: "Ὅταν δὲ προφητικὸν πνεῦμα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι ὡς ἤδη γινόμενα λέγῃ, ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς προσηνέμοις δοξάζει ἰστί. Apol. p. 81. So that there was not quite so much ignorance on these matters in the first ages of the church as our German friends would have us believe. Eusebius too, in the Demonstratio Evangelica, lib. iv. cap. 15, has the following words on this subject: Κατά τινα δὲ συνήθειαν προφητικὴν, τὸ μέλλον ὁ προφήτης ὡς παρωχικός ἀναφωνεῖ, καὶ ὡς περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ προφητιούντος δηλοῖ.

themselves tell us, of impressing the reader with the assurance that the thing predicted shall come to pass. All prophecy, therefore, must be enounced, either presenting the thing predicted as going on, or as completed. What then, I ask, is a prophet to do in order to avoid the objection of Mr. Rosenmüller? If he predict at all, he must do it in one or other of the tenses just mentioned; for his language will supply him with no other. I will answer the question myself. Mr. Rosenmüller and his school dislike prophetic declarations in every case; and, therefore, for the want of better argument, objections of the most frivolous and absurd nature are advanced; and then we are told, that all these are drawn forth from the treasuries of advanced science, enlightened times, &c. &c. *ejusdem furfuris*!

But further, Mr. Rosenmüller thinks that the passage above cited is sufficient to prove, among other things, that it could not have been written by the person who wrote the first thirty-nine chapters of this book. If this be true, we cannot, of necessity, find its parallel in any of those chapters. We have, however, one like it even in the very first chapter, which must have escaped his notice, (v. 7): "Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire; your land, *strangers devour it* in your presence," &c. Now, according to the above reasoning, this must have been going on even while the country was in peace and quietness, and quite secure from any fear of a captivity!—But, we have another most philosophical objection: Denunciations of wrath, it is said, must *have been obscure* to a people living in peace and quietness; and to console them under such circumstances would have been absurd. I answer: Denunciations of wrath are not necessarily obscure or unintelligible under any circumstances; and, when the nation was sunk in vice, they could not but have been both intelligible and seasonable: nor would consolations be out of place, when addressed to those who followed the good and right way, but who must nevertheless suffer in the common fate of the country. Perhaps I may be allowed to ask: If threatenings are not to be denounced before the calamity falls, when are they? When the chastisement has been given, they will come too late, and therefore be useless; and the same may be said of the consolations offered. The intention of prophecy, in cases like this,

must have been to bring about reform, and thus to avert the threatened scourge; just as we are told was the case in the mission and preaching of Jonah to the Ninevites. And what, I ask, could be so seasonable, so well directed, and so merciful? It was surely the voice of a friend warning the prodigal that, unless he left the paths of vice, misery would be his inevitable portion. For my own part, I can see no force whatever in these objections; and perhaps I may be excused, if I say, that had such been offered on any question relating to science, they would have never been permitted to see the light.

Mr. Rosenmüller seems to be aware, that some objections may be made to this doctrine; because, as he truly observes, this prophet, whoever he was, does actually speak of some of these events as future: and the question now will be: How are these discrepancies to be reconciled? Nothing on earth is more easy. The writer must have assumed the person of some older prophet; and whose could he have found so well suited to his purpose as that of Isaiah, who wrote the first thirty-nine chapters of this book, and who in the last had foretold the captivity? Here, then, the difficulty is solved in a moment. No proof is given, and none is wanted: the soundness of the conclusion is such as to preclude the possibility of further inquiry or doubt! On this view of the case, then, there can be no consolations, no intimations of prosperous times, predicted in the first thirty-nine chapters of this prophet: he only foretold the captivity. It was the pseudo-Isaiah, living near the end of it, who prophesied of the more glorious times of the return. If this be the fact, how are we to account for the declarations found in the first five verses of the second chapter? in the last five verses of the fourth? in the first seven verses of the ninth? in the whole of the eleventh, twelfth, and fourteenth chapters, where we have matter as glowing and as specific as any to be found in the last twenty-six?

But Mr. Rosenmüller will tell us that, after all, these are most vague declarations; and such as were never realised by the Jews, as far as we learn from their later writers. This is a remark, I am sorry to say, often made by some among ourselves. It is, nevertheless, founded either on gross ignorance or wilful misrepresentation. The predictions relating to the captivity, we know, like that made by Jonah to the Ninevites, were conditional. If they would return and repent, we

are expressly told, they should eat the good of the land ; if not, the sword should devour them. Of the same character were the declarations made by Moses ; namely, that as long as they would obey the statutes of their God, their land should produce all manner of plenty, while their enemies should be removed far away ; but, on the contrary, should they betake themselves to idolatry and rebellion, not only should the earth under them become as iron, but the heavens should be closed, and their enemies should persecute them on every side. All this, their history abundantly assures us, took place. This, then, must also be kept in view, when we speak of times subsequent to the captivity. So long as the Jews were obedient, extraordinary mercies were extended to them, in the favours conferred by the kings of Persia ; but when they betook themselves to evil, they found enemies in abundance, and such as were quite powerful enough to put an entire end to their national prosperity. In this case, then, the Scriptures describe the system which they propose, rather than the mere characters of the persons concerned ; and in this they are right. What, I would ask, should we think of a book which instructed us to look for our notions of religion from the characters only of those who professed it ? Where, in such a case, could we expect to find any thing stable ? The Bible, however, takes other and better ground ; it describes the prosperity, confidence, and peace which passeth understanding, of those, and of those only, who obey its saving declarations : and history assures us that these have always been realised. People are apt to imagine that, where these times of prosperity, &c., have not been experienced, either the prophecy is unmeaning, or that it is yet to be fulfilled.* As well might the

* The most extraordinary instance of this sort of prophetic interpretation known in modern times is to be found in a sermon, entitled "The Times of the Gentiles," by the Rev. Hugh McNeile, published by Hatchard and Son. London, 1828. In this we are taught that, because the world has never yet witnessed generally any thing like the glowing character of Christianity as given by the prophets, Christianity cannot be the dispensation they meant ; and, therefore, that we must look for another ! I think I may say, that if the ministers of Christ generally take up this view (and I know of no controlling power to be expected from above to prevent them), the result will be, that, whatever other dispensation we may expect, certain it is, that Christianity will, as far as its ministers are concerned, be preached down.

six hundred thousand men who fell in the wilderness have complained, that the promise had not been fulfilled to them; or that it was vague, because they were not allowed to enter the land of Canaan. The non-fulfilment of prophecy of this sort need not, therefore, alarm any one. The very nature of it implies a condition; and, when this is the case, the infidelity of the nominal believer is the evil to be complained of, and not the character of the Revelation. In such predictions as those which foretell the coming of Christ and the end of the theocracy, the case is widely different: these have no sort of connection with either the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of men; they depend entirely on the gracious disposition of the Deity alone; and, as they involve the very means of grace, they are necessarily independent of all human endeavour. But on this subject more will be said hereafter.

SECTION IV.

CONTAINING AN EXAMINATION OF THE CRITICISMS OF DR. GESENIUS ON CERTAIN PARTS OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECY.

THE next grand objection of Mr. Rosenmüller, and which has been reiterated by Dr. Gesenius, involves the consideration of certain words and phrases, which are said to occur only in this last portion of Isaiah's prophecy, and which are therefore put down as being peculiar to him. Rosenmüller* has pointed out the passages; but Dr. Gesenius† has given us the words and phrases meant. We shall, therefore, now proceed to consider a few of them. Israel then is styled **יְהוָה עַבְדּוֹ** *Jehovah's servant*, chap. xli. 8, 9, &c. and its synonyme **מַלְאָכֵי** *Mal'aké*, xlii. 18. **אֲרָצִים** *Aratzim* is put for countries generally, xlii. 4, 10, &c. **צִדְקָה** *Tsédek*, for *whole, sound, help, deliverance, victory*, &c.: so likewise **יֵשׁוּעַ** *Yéshuah*, **יֵשׁוּעָה** *Yéshúah*, xli. 2, 10, &c. **אֶפְסֵי אֲרָץ** *Aphsé Erets*, **קִצּוֹת הָאָרֶץ** *Kětsóth Háárets*, xl. 28; xli. 5, &c. **עוֹל** *Húl*, for *child*, xlix. 15, &c. &c. We have repetitions as **הִנֵּה הִנֵּה** *Hinneh*

* Scholia in Vetus Testamentum, Pars Tertia, Proœmium, p. 3.

† Commentar über den Iesaja, Zweyter Theil, Einleitung, p. 16.

Hinneh, behold, behold, xli. 27. אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי *ănōkī ănōkī*, I, I. xliii. 11, &c. אָנִי אָנִי *ănī ănī*, I, I. xlviii. 15. נַחֲמֵנוּ *Nākhāmū Nākhāmū*, comfort ye, comfort ye, &c. &c. We also have, it is added, many parenthetical constructions, such, for example, as: "Thus saith God the Lord (he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein); I the Lord have called thee," &c. (xlii. 5, &c.) xliv. 2, 6, 24; xlv. 11, 18, 19, &c. In these instances, the name of Jehovah precedes, and Israel follows. In others, as xli. 8, 9, 10, Israel precedes, &c.—In chap. lxiii. 3, we have אֲנִי־אֱלֹהִים for הוֹאֵה־אֱלֹהִים, which is a Chaldee, not a Hebrew, form. And the general conclusion is, that these six and twenty chapters could not have been written by Isaiah; but must have had their origin some time near the end of the captivity, and after the things mentioned in them had come to pass.

We shall now consider, in the first place, the principles on which these objections are generally advanced. It is objected, then, that the matter, the phraseology, and many of the words, of these last twenty-six chapters, differ very considerably from those of the first thirty-nine found in this book; and, therefore, it is affirmed they could not have come from the same author. My answer is: This objection can be allowed only under certain limitations; because, if we confine any author to one sort of matter only, or to the use of only certain words and phrases, we shall do that which experience will shew us is contrary to the best usage. There is, it is true, a style peculiar to most good authors: that of Cicero, for example, every where maintains its fulness, perspicuity, harmony, order, and accurate selection of words. The same may be said of Demosthenes, and of many other eminent writers. Still, we must not affirm that, because the character of the Orations against Catiline differs greatly from that of the Book of Offices, the same man could not possibly have been the author of both. Nor will any one allow, that, because the *Æneid* of Virgil manifests differences very remarkable and striking from the strains of the *Bucolics* and *Georgics*, Virgil never could, therefore,

have been their common author. This would be next to madness: and yet this is what is calmly, and in good set terms, here done, with regard to the prophecy of Isaiah. Again, let any one compare the tragedies of our immortal bard with his comedies; and then let him ask himself, in the true spirit of German rationalism, whether it is possible the same person could have been their common author? Could the man who wrote the tragedy of Macbeth, have also written "Much ado about Nothing?" Quite impossible. Modern science can never receive a proposition so incredible and monstrous! But to come to particular expressions. Shakespeare speaks in one place of "*the thunder's dreadful organ-pipe*;" in another, of the "*all-dreaded thunder stone*;" and in another he designates it *Heaven's "sharp and sulphurous bolt."* Now, I ask: Is it possible Shakespeare could ever have varied thus in his expressions? Must we not here have had a pseudo-Shakespeare, who probably lived in the times of the second Charles? For it is quite certain that we can identify some expressions found in these writings with others in Dryden, Butler, &c. There must have been too a pseudo-Milton. Let any one read the opening of the *Paradise Lost*, and then let him turn to the little poem termed *L'Allegro*, and say, whether his reason and rationalism will allow it to be possible, that the same man could have written both! Impossible. The latter is the production of a pseudo-Milton, who must have lived long after the times of the commonwealth. *Q. E. D.* Nor could the same person who wrote the *Comus* have composed the *Paradise Lost*; for in the latter it is said of the clouds, "till the sun tinge your fleecy skirts with gold." But in the *Comus*, a cloud is said to "turn its silver lining to the moon." The question is: Could the same man have spoken of the fleecy skirts of a cloud, and of its silver lining? Besides, the one speaks of *gold*, the other of *silver*; making distinctions as plain and obvious as those of the *gold* and *silver* ages! We have then *rationality*, and of course *truly*, a pseudo-Cicero, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton: and, with a very little trouble we may shew, that there are pseudo-authors under every name, not excepting those of Bertholdt, Rosenmüller, and Gesenius.

We now come to the specific charges. The first phrase pointed out is עֶבֶד יְהוָה, *Jehovah's servant*; put to signify

the better part of the people. I will allow, that this combination with its plural עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה, *servants of Jehovah*, occurs frequently in the last six and twenty chapters of Isaiah, while neither of them occurs in the first thirty-nine; but I will not therefore also allow, that the author of the first, could not have been the author of the last, portion of this book. This would be to lay it down as a rule, that every author is always bound to use the same expressions under all circumstances, which is absurd. Besides, a good reason can be given, why expressions of this sort might be expected to occur in this last portion, which do not in the first. We will take for granted, that an author may be more or less minatory, as his subject may require. This, I think, no one will dispute. In the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah, the writer may then employ language of a more threatening nature, than he does in the last six and twenty; although, as already noticed, the first part is not without its consolations: they are, however, less continuous: and the latter part of the book seems more particularly to have been set apart for this purpose, in order, as it should seem, to assure the pious Jews that their expectations should not fail. Now, under such circumstances, is it not likely that such addresses as *servant of Jehovah, servants of Jehovah, Israel my servant*, and the like, would more frequently be had recourse to, than when it was the business of the prophet to insist generally on threats? These are evidently expressions of endearment, which could not be used in conjunction with such as, *Ye rulers of Sodom, people of Gomorrah*, and the like, which often occur in the first part. But why, it will be asked, do these expressions never occur in the first thirty-nine chapters? I answer: I know not: but I do know, that in the last four books of the *Æneid*, and in the last eight of the *Iliad*, a great number of words and phrases do occur not to be found in the preceding books, where a less cogent reason can be given for the occurrence, than that already advanced with regard to Isaiah. Authors, for some reason or other, do insist upon the right of choosing their own language; and they do occasionally very much vary in its application. In the last six and twenty chapters of this prophet, there is, nevertheless, a wonderful conformity of style and phraseology with the preceding thirty-nine, as we

shall presently see, notwithstanding the omission of this one phrase.

But have we nothing in the first thirty-nine chapters equivalent in sense and feeling with the phrases in question, and such as we may suppose (allowing the variety just noticed in Milton and Shakespeare) a writer of this cast would naturally say? We have in chap. xxvi. 20, לָהּ עַמִּי, “*come, my people;*” xxxii. 18, וַיָּשֶׁב עַמִּי, “*and my people shall dwell;*” xxxv. 10, וַיִּפְדּוּנִי יְהוָה, “*and the ransomed of Jehovah,**” &c. Now, I may ask: Is it improbable that an author, who in one place calls the true Israelites the *servants of Jehovah*, would style them in another *his people, his redeemed*, &c.? I think not. It is just what other authors do in similar cases, as noticed above with regard to Shakespeare and Milton. Nor is there any thing new in the phrase, *servant or servants of Jehovah*, or *my servants*. We have, Lev. xxv. 42, בְּיַעֲבֹדֵיהֶם, “*for they are my servants.*” So 2 Kings, x. 23, עַבְדֵּי יְהוָה, “*the servants of Jehovah;*” *ib.* ix. 7, עַבְדֵּי הַנְּבִיאִים, “*my servants the prophets.*” So also Moses is termed יְהוָה עֶבֶד, “*the servant of Jehovah,*” Deut. xxxiv. 5; and Isa. xxii. 20, Eliakim is termed עַבְדִּי, *my servant*. The phrase too, עֲבַד אֶת יְהוָה, “*to serve Jehovah,*” occurs in Exod. x. 8, 24, 26, &c. and also in the early part of this prophet, chap. xix. 21, 23. In verse 25 we have, *my people*, the work of *my hands*, and *mine inheritance*, applied to Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, respectively. Although, therefore, we have not the *very phrase*, we have the *phraseology*, with other equivalents, such as we might naturally have expected from some one author, treating the same subject under a different point of view. No good reason can, therefore, hence be deduced to prove, that the first thirty-nine, and the last six and twenty chapters, of the book of Isaiah did not proceed from the same author. On the contrary, we have here every thing that might have been reasonably expected from one and the same writer.

The next word adduced is מַלְאָךְ, *messenger*, &c. found in chap. xlii. 18, in a sense synonymous with *servant of Jehovah*, &c. I remark: The utmost that can be made of this

* So also the synonyme נִפְדּוּנֵי יְהוָה, *the redeemed of Jehovah*, chap. lxii. 12.

is, that the word מְלָאָךְ *seems* here to occur in a sense perfectly equivalent to עֶבֶד, *servant*; but it only *seems* to do so. *Messenger* and *servant* are so nearly synonymous in their use throughout the Hebrew Bible, as every one will see who will take the trouble to consult the Concordance, that it must require no ordinary stretch of the imagination to extract here from the parallelism the fact, that *servant* and *messenger* are *perfectly* synonymous. Köcher,* one of the best German scholars of the last century, says on this verse, that although the parallelism is not to be neglected, still it is not to be too much pressed: which, I am sure, every one who has had any practice in the Hebrew Bible must allow to be just.

It is far from certain, however, whether Dr. Gesenius, or Dr. Rosenmüller, has yet arrived at the true sense of this passage. For my own part, I believe they have both failed; and these are my reasons: I think there can be no doubt that the eighteenth verse refers to the Israelites, הַחֲרָשִׁים שָׁמָּעוּ, “*Hear, ye deaf,*” &c. But it may be justly doubted, whether the following verse relates to the same persons: certainly the reasons given by Mr. Rosenmüller and Dr. Gesenius are not sufficient to shew that it does. מְלָאָכִי, אֲשֶׁלָּה, “*my messenger (whom) I will send,*” says Rosenmüller; “*for this people was destined to call other nations from the worship of idols, and to bring them to the true religion.*”† My remark is: I know of no such intimation in the Old Testament; nor can Mr. Rosenmüller adduce any, directly to prove his assertion. It is true, salvation was to be of the Jews, and the knowledge of the law to come from Jerusalem; but this is a very different thing from affirming, that the Jews should *as a people* be the teachers or publishers of either. The Apostles were indeed Jews: but it will require some violence to identify them with the Jewish people. The fact is, the Jews were, as a body, their most inveterate enemies; and such they still are to their doctrine. I am of opinion, therefore, that the term מְלָאָכִי, *my messenger*, cannot with propriety be here referred to the Jewish people. But, as it is occasionally applied to the prophets, I may ask,

* “Dixerim tamen, parallelismum ut non negligendum, sic neque nimis aut ubique urgendum esse,” in Rosenmüller’s scholia on the passage.

† See schol. in loc.

Why may it not be referred to Isaiah himself, especially as we find him commissioned in the sixth chapter of this prophecy, to go and preach to the Jewish people? Let us turn to that passage. At verse 8, it is said: "Whom shall I send? (אֶשְׁלַח the very word used here), and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me." Again, in the following verses, we have matter perfectly similar to that in chap. xlii. "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart (*i. e.* pronounce it to be*) fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see," &c. Then, in the forty-second chapter, after declaring, (ver. 13.) that "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man" (פִּגְמוֹר, see chap. ix. 6, where the same term is applied to God), &c. we have at verse 16, "And I will bring the blind by a way they knew not; I will make darkness light before them," &c.: and at verse 18, "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see." I think, therefore, we may safely conclude, that these passages are parallel in subject and sense.† Let us now proceed to verse 19: "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger *that* I sent?" Thus it stands in our authorised version: but I object, for several reasons. In the first place, I object to מִי עֵוֶר being translated by "*who is blind?*" because this rendering makes the whole passage obscure: and secondly, because it is not necessary so to render it. The word עֵוֶר we find used as a verb in the Pihēl conjugation, as in 2 Kings, xxv. 7. Jer. xxxix. 7. lii. 11, &c. where it may be translated *he blinded*, or the like. And in Exod. xxiii. 8, we have פִּתְיוֹן יַעֲרֵר פְּתָחַיִם, "*for a gift blindeth the wise.*" See Deut. xvi. 19, where the blindness superinduced is also mental. In this place, therefore, I shall take עֵוֶר to mean, *he blinded*, or *he pronounced to be blind*, just as in the instance above cited, in which *he made fat*, or *pronounced the people to be so*. Taking this verb then, in Pihēl, I shall, for the sake of consistency, take הִרְשָׁה as a verb in Pihēl also, and signifying, *he pronounced* (them to be) *dumb*. The whole verse (19) may then be thus rendered:

* See my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 111, 112, 119, &c.

† Passages parallel to these will also be found in chapters xxix. 10, 18. xxxv. 5. xliii. 8. which may serve to shew, how much our prophet, both in his first and last portions, is attached to this phraseology.

"Who hath pronounced (them) blind, except my servant? (Isaiah), or hath pronounced (them) dumb, like my messenger (whom) I send (has done)? Who hath called (them) blind, like him who has been perfected (for this work), nay, pronounced (them) blind, like Jehovah's servant?"* — "Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not," &c. which last is explanatory.

Now, if we turn back to the sixth chapter, we shall be able to make all plain. At verse 10, the prophet is sent to pronounce their heart heavy, and their eyes closed; which perhaps will be allowed to be equivalent to making them blind and deaf, as mentioned in chap. xlii. In the seventh verse, the prophet's iniquity is taken away, in order, as it should seem, to qualify him for this office: for this reason in chap. xlii. he is termed מְשָׁלֵם, completed, perfected. In this view, then עֲבָדִי, my servant, מְלָאכִי, my messenger, מְשָׁלֵם, perfected person, יְהוָה עֲבָד, Jehovah's servant, will all apply easily and naturally to the prophet Isaiah; and the passage will be a perfect parallel to that noticed in the sixth chapter of the same prophecy. I only ask: Is it not then highly

* Gesenius here agrees with Rosenmüller, but without assigning any reason. His words are: "*Wer ist taub, wenn's mein Knecht nicht ist?*) wer verdient diesen namen, wenn ihn Israël nicht verdient? *mein Bote, den ich gesandt.*) Es fällt auf, dass Israël hier ein Bote genannt wird, den Gott gesandt habe;" (Zweyter Theil, p. 66.): *i. e.* Who is deaf, when my servant is not? Who deserves this name, when Israel deserves it not? &c. This last is the comment. The first, however, which is the translation, is erroneous. The original is מִי עֲבָדִי כִּי אִם-עֲבָדִי, of which I have given a literal version. I may here remark, that כִּי אִם cannot signify *when* (*wenn*); and that no passage can be found in the Hebrew Bible justifying such an interpretation. The true signification of אִם is *surely, certainly*, or the like;¹ and when combined with כִּי *for, since*, &c. must mean, *for surely*, or *since surely, truly*, &c. which will suit every passage in which this combination is found. It is remarkable enough that Noldius has, in his Concordance of the Particles, given this passage in two different places, with two different translations. In the first he makes כִּי אִם equal to *quam*; in the second, to *sicut* (pp. 379, 80.): and in his Annotationes et Vindiciæ (n. 1355, ed. 1734), he has said just as much as to leave the question in a more doubtful state than he found it. One thing is quite certain, no effort has yet given a tolerable explanation of this passage, on the supposition of עֲבָד being a noun; and I

¹ See my Hebrew Grammar, p. 376.

probable, that the same person is author of both these predictions? I leave the reply to others. I think, I may now say, that the criticisms of neither Mr. Rosenmüller nor Dr. Gesenius are here well founded: and this must suffice on this point.

Our next criticism is grounded on the occurrence of the word אַיִם, put for *countries* generally: chap. xlii. 4. &c. But this word occurs also in the first part of this prophet, which Dr. Gesenius had omitted to notice; *e. g.* chap. xi. 11. אַיִי הַיָּם, *the islands of the sea*; xxiv. 14. בְּאֵי הַיָּם, *in the islands of the sea*. And in the singular number in chap. xx. 6. xxiii. 2, 5. The occurrence of this word, therefore, will prove exactly the reverse of what Dr. Gesenius would have it to prove.

Our animadversions will now be on the words צָדָק, יִשׁוּעָה, יְשׁוּעָה, occurring in the sense of *whole, deliverance, victory, &c.*, and sometimes in parallels of the same construction. The places cited, are chapters xli. 2, 10. xlii. 6, 21 (?). xlv. 8, 13. li. 5. lviii. 2. lxii. 1, 2. also צָדָקָה *tsedūkā*, in the same sense, chap. xlv. 8, 24. xlv. 13.

shall maintain that no effort ever will. If, however, we take עֲנִי and הִרְשָׁה as verbs in *pihēl*, all becomes clear, regular, and easy. Dr. Gesenius proceeds: "My messenger whom I sent. Com.: It appears, that Israel is here named a messenger, whom God has sent." This, too, is the opinion of Mr. Rosenmüller; but it is quite groundless and unnecessary.

It will be replied, perhaps, that we have no objective or complementary words here, supposing עֲנִי and הִרְשָׁה to be transitive verbs. I answer: This is by no means unusual in the Hebrew, and its dialects, especially in verbs of this sort and form.¹ Besides, as the particles כִּי אֵם and the כִּי following can be interpreted according to their usual and obvious signification, on no other view; we need not be alarmed at the ellipsis, which in such cases is so frequently to be met with. The various attempts of the commentators and translators to make out this passage, may be seen in Rosenmüller's scholia in loco.

¹ See my Hebrew Grammar, p. 335, with the references, Ludolf's Eth. Gram. p. 32, note I. This circumstance has proved a fertile source of mistake to many, and among these to the learned M. de Sacy, for we have, in his Chrest. Arab. p. 7. وَحَتَّى ضَرَبَ بِرِجْلِهِ وَمَاتَ, which is translated at page 5, (edit. 2), "qu'ayant heurté du pied contre quelque chose, il se tua. When the passage is literally: "Until he struck with his feet and died;" vulgarly, he kicked and died.

xlvi. 18, &c. One sense in which it occurs, is said to be very rare in any other book, as in Jer. xxxiii. 16. Dan. ix. 24. Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16. Let us put all this to the trial. My remark is: It is very true we have such combinations in these places, which may generally be rendered as Dr. Gesenius has said they may; and our question is: Have we no such passages, either in the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah, or elsewhere? We are told in the next page (16) of Dr. Gesenius's work, that מִשְׁפָּט *right*, &c. also occurs exclusively in this last part of Isaiah, in a religious sense. We may as well here take in this word also, because we can conveniently dispose of them all together.

In the first place then, we have in Isaiah, i. 26. יִקְרָא לָהּ עִיר הַצֶּדֶק הַזֶּה נֶאֱמָנָה, "Thou shalt be called the city of *righteousness*, the faithful city. And in the next verse, צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדָּה וּשְׁבָתָה בַּצְדָּקָה, "Zion shall be redeemed with *judgment*, and her converts with *righteousness*." The first of these passages is thus rendered by Dr. Gesenius himself: "Dann wirst du heissen: Stadt der Gerechtigkeit, treue Stadt:" then shalt thou be called city of righteousness, true city. I object, however, to the rendering of נֶאֱמָנָה by *true*, as being too vague: *faithful* or *unbending* would be much better. צֶדֶק *tsédek*, in this case preceding, will also have the sense of *sound*, *right*, *whole*, or the like. In the next passage, צְדָקָה *tsédaka*, is in the same parallel with מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat*. The first evidently signifies *religious truth*, *right*, *righteousness*, or the like: must not then מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat* here have a similar signification? and one which our author contends is peculiar to the last six and twenty chapters of this book only? But how does Dr. Gesenius himself translate it? "Zion wird durch RECHT gerettet werden, und seine bekehrten Bürger durch Gerechtigkeit:" Zion shall be redeemed through *right* (justice), and her converted inhabitants through *righteousness*. We have then, here, one of the disputed words at least, used in the sense adopted by the psuedo-Isaiah; and a little examination will convince us that the second is used so too. In chap. xvi. 5. we have צֶדֶק in connection with הַסֵּד *piety*, אֱמֶת *truth*, and מִשְׁפָּט *judgment*, or *right*; and with מִשְׁפָּט in v. 7, 16. ix. 6. xxvi. 9, 10. xxiii. 5. and in xxxii. 16, 17, it is said to produce *peace*, *quietness*, and *confidence* for ever.

It will be replied, perhaps, that notwithstanding all this, we have neither יֵשַׁע *yēshah*, nor יְשׁוּעָה *yeshūah*, *salvation, deliverance*, &c. in any one of these places. It is very true we have not; yet, if *quietness, confidence, and everlasting peace*, and the like, are found, which manifestly signify *the same thing*, I cannot see why we should complain because the very same words are not used. Good writers generally love variety, as we have seen in the examples adduced from our own poets. No violence has been done to their style by adopting different words; nor can there be in the case of our prophet. But these words, יֵשַׁע and יְשׁוּעָה, do occur in the first part of our prophet, and in the same sense which they have in the second; e. g. chap. xvii. 10: כִּי שָׁכַחְתָּ אֱלֹהֶי יִשְׁעָה וְצֹר מְצָאָה לֹא זָכַרְתָּ “Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy *salvation*, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy *strength*. Here we have יִשְׁעָה in the same parallel with *the rock of thy strength*, which must signify the *means of thy deliverance, victory*, &c. just as it does in the passages pointed out by Dr. Gesenius; and so he translates it: “Denn du vergassdest Gott, deinen Retter, an den Fels, deine Zuflucht, dachtest du nicht.” Since thou hast forgotten God, thy Saviour, for the rock of thy refuge thou hast not cared. Here Dr. Gesenius gives an abstract noun the signification of a concrete one, and that such too, as to leave no doubt as to what sense he ascribes to it. Let us now take an instance or two of the use of יְשׁוּעָה *yeshūah*.

In chap. xxvi. 1, we have עִיר עֲזָרָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה וְיִשִּׁית חֹמֹת וְיַחַל “We have a strong city: *salvation* will (God) appoint (for) walls and bulwarks.” Here יְשׁוּעָה signifies something like *strength or victory*; and this Dr. Gesenius will have it, it signifies in the last six and twenty chapters of this prophet. The place is thus translated by him: “Eine feste Stadt haben wir: (Gottes) Beystand ist uns Mauer und Graben.” We have a firm city: (God’s) assistance is our wall and ditch. יְשׁוּעָה is here rendered by *assistance*, and וְיִשִּׁית by *is*, which is much too free. The sense, however, of יְשׁוּעָה is preserved, which is all I now contend for. Chap. xlix. 8. should be compared with this, which will put an end to every doubt which can exist on the subject. There we have: כִּיּוֹם יְשׁוּעָה עֲזַרְתִּיךָ, in the day of *salvation* I have helped thee; or, in the day of *deliverance or victory* I have assisted thee. So Dr.

Gesenius: "Zur Zeit des Heils (will ich) dir helfen." *In the time of HEALTH, &c. will I help thee.* See also chap. xii. 2, 3. xxvi. 18. xxxiii. 2, 6, &c. which must be more than enough to satisfy the most sceptical on this question.

We are told in the next place, that the verb צָמַח, to *sprout*, &c. is used to signify the origin of some new occurrence in the world, as in chapp. xlii. 9. xliii. 19. lviii. 8. My reply is: I see nothing new or extraordinary in the use of this word in any of these places. The word generally signifies *to shoot*, or *spring up*, and is applied to events just as it is to herbs or shrubs. See Job. v. 6. Ps. lxxxv. 12. cxxxii. 16. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. These passages are perhaps sufficient to shew, that the usage of the word in question is not peculiar to Isaiah; and, that in most of them, it must have been so used long before his times. But this is not all: in the passages pointed out by Dr. Gesenius, the blessings of true religion are clearly intimated, which could come to pass under no other circumstances than those of the promise made to Abraham, and afterwards renewed to the royal house of David. I repeat it: No times of prosperity, no blessings either temporal or spiritual, are offered on any other grounds throughout the text of both Testaments.

Now, it may be asked, have we no intimations bearing directly on this point in the earlier part of our prophet? The answer is: We have one at least, of a most decisive character. Chap. iv. 2. יְהוָה צִמַּח יְהוָה לְצִבְי וּלְקִבְיֹר, "In that day shall the *branch* (germ or stem) of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious," &c. This I say intimates, quite as clearly as any passage adduced from the last six and twenty chapters of this book can, the origin of some new event in the world; and the very event, too, I will contend, intimated in the passages adduced by Dr. Gesenius. Here, then, we have both the true and the pseudo-Isaiah using the same terms when predicting the same event; not in a servile imitation, which might, indeed, have raised some suspicion of a forgery; but in such a manner as to assure the reader, that the coincidence is natural, and must have been undesigned. In this place we have the noun, which has also been used by Jeremiah, in conjunction *with the verb*, when speaking of the same event; but in the latter part of Isaiah we have only the verb, while the

event predicted, is beyond all doubt one and the same. The prophet, therefore, is every where regular and consistent. No where does he servilely copy himself; this (had he done it) might, indeed, have been cited as savouring of imposture. On the contrary, his matter is identical, while his language is such as any powerful original writer would naturally use. Dr. Gesenius's version runs thus: "*Dann aber wird der Spross Jehova's herrlich und glänzend seyn.*" But then will Jehovah's shoot be magnificent and shining. Where it is remarkable, that he uses the word *spross*, shoot, while in the places adduced he has the verb *sprossen*, to shoot; which might have suggested to him, that the prophet, though very slightly varying his language, was speaking on precisely the same subject.

In the next place, the word רֵאשִׁיטוֹת, *former things*, &c., is pointed out, as occurring in chap. xliii. 18, &c. I answer: Although it does not occur in the plural number in the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah, it does nevertheless in the singular, in the very first, *e. g.* וְאֶשִׁיבָה שְׁפָטֶיךָ בְּבְרֵאשִׁיטָה, "And I will restore thy judges as *at the first*," (chap. i. 26). Again, chap. viii. 23, we have the same word in the singular number and in the masculine gender, בְּעֵת *הָרֵאשִׁוֹן, *as in the former time* (auth. vers. ix. 1, *when at the first*, which is not sufficiently literal). In the latter part of Isaiah, then, we have a word in the plural number feminine, which occurs in the singular in the first chapter, and in the masculine gender in the eighth; and, because we have this slight variation of the same word, used nevertheless in precisely the same sense, it is argued that a pseudo-Isaiah must have used the plural form, the genuine Isaiah the singular! I may remark: Nothing short of *miraculous powers* surely would ever have come to such a conclusion as this; but these, according to Dr. Gesenius, no man ever did, nor ever will, possess.

Again, מֵרֵאשִׁיט, *from former* (time), and לְאַחֲרָיִךְ, *to after* (time), are not found in the former part of Isaiah. I answer: Nor is it necessary they should; unless it can be shewn that authors never do, in the latter part of their writings, use words not to be found in the earlier portions.

* Which also occurs in the latter part of Isaiah, chap. xli. 4, 27. xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. And with the article, xliii. 27. And in the feminine singular, lxxv. 7. And with a particle prefixed, lii. 4. lx. 9.

But the fact is, these words do occur in the earlier parts of Isaiah, if we except the particles attached to them, which, with the context, will necessarily exercise a great influence on their signification. The same may be said of אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ, and קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ, signifying *the extremities of the land or earth*, which do not occur in the plural forms in the first nine and thirty chapters of our prophet. They occur, however, in the singular in this former part, which they also do *in the latter*. If, therefore, this prophet is not constant in using these plural forms, he is in using their singulars; *e. g.* chap. v. 8, עַד אֶפֶס מָקוֹם, *unto the deficiency, or end of place, i. e.* till no place be found. So chap. xli. 29. אֶפֶס מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם, *deficiency, or end of their works*: to which many others might be added. The same may be said of the other phrase, קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ, which, although it does not occur in the plural form in the first thirty-nine chapters, does actually occur in the singular; and this also it does in the last twenty-six; *e. g.* Is. v. 26. מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ, *from the extremity of the land, or earth*; so *ib.* xlii. 10. xliii. 6: to which many similar examples may be added. The only exception, therefore, in all these cases is, that we find the plural number used occasionally in the last twenty-six chapters of this prophet, which does not occur in the first thirty-nine; while, nevertheless, these plurals are not peculiar even to the pseudo-Isaiah, but are found in other writers who flourished before his time. Their singulars, however, are used in both cases; which surely ought not to have occurred, according to the views of Dr. Gesenius.

I must now be allowed to pass over several other criticisms advanced, which, as they are obviously weak, need not be formally discussed, and to come to the repetitions which Dr. Gesenius discovers in these last six and twenty chapters, to which he has not been able to find any parallels in the first thirty-nine. These are, הִנֵּה הִנֵּה, *behold, behold*; אֲנִי אֲנִי and אֲנִי אֲנִי, *I, I*; נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ, *comfort ye, comfort ye*: to which some others may be added. My first remark is: It will be unreasonable to expect constant repetitions of the same words in any author. In the *Bucolics* of Virgil,* for example, we have *Ah Corydon, Corydon*; *heu, heu*; and

* Eclog. ii.

again, *Hyla, Hyla*.* In the *Æneid* we have, *jam, jamque manu tenet*,† &c. No one will, perhaps, here argue, that if Virgil chooses to repeat certain words, he must always repeat the same words, otherwise such repetitions cannot come from him; *i. e.* if *Corydon, Corydon*, has once occurred, we must not expect to have from Virgil, *Hyla, Hyla*; and if we once have from this author *heu, heu*, we cannot also have from him *jam, jamque*, &c. This, I think, is too weak to be allowed to pass for a moment; and all we can expect must be, that if an author repeats words in order to strengthen his composition in one place, he may also repeat others, when his subject shall call for it, in another. No one can reasonably expect more than this. With this principle before us then, let us now proceed to examine the expressions of our genuine and pseudo-Isaiah, as our German friends are pleased to call them. We have seen the repetitions *אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי, I, I*, &c.; let the reader now turn to the genuine Isaiah, chap. xxiv. 16. and he will there find *רְזִיזְלִי רְזִיזְלִי, my leanness mine, my leanness mine!* chap. xxvi. 2. *תִּשְׁכַּח שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם, thou keepest peacefully, peacefully*, &c. (The authorised version is not sufficiently literal here.) Again, xxix. 1. *הוֹי אֶרְיָאֵל אֶרְיָאֵל, woe to Ariel, to Ariel*; and again, xxxviii. 19. *חַי הִי הוּא יוֹדֶה, the living, the living, he praises thee*; see also xxviii. 10, 13. These, I think, are as complete instances of repetition as any to be found in any part of the Hebrew Bible; and, according to my principles, they are perfectly parallel with those adduced by Dr. Gesenius. That they are not the very same expressions, I allow: but then I argue, as already shewn, that it is not necessary they should be; it is sufficient for the purpose of identifying the author, if they are analogous. But I will go further, and will affirm, that the former part of this prophecy abounds in expressions of this sort; *e. g.* chap. i. 16. *רְחֹצְוּ הַנְּפִי הַסִּירִי, wash ye, make ye clean, put away*, &c.; here, however, the words are not identical, yet their bearing is *one* and the *same*. In like manner, and for the same reason, is *וַהֲמָלֵא, and it is filled*, used three times consecutively in chap. ii. 7, 8. So also *מִשְׁעָן וּמִשְׁעָנָה כֹּל מִשְׁעָנֵי־לֶחֶם וְכֹל מִשְׁעָנֵי־מַיִם, the staff and staff (masc. and fem.), the whole staff of bread, and the whole staff of water*; and the latter part of ver. 16,

* Eclog. vi.

† *Æneid* ii. line 530.

chap. xxiv. *בְּנָדִים בְּנָדוּ וּבְנָדִים בְּנָדוּ*, *the deceivers have deceived, even deceiving have the deceivers deceived, i. e. used enormous and continued deception.** It will be quite unnecessary, I presume, to add any thing to this list of parallel passages. Nothing, I think, can be more evident than that, in each case, the writer is constant and invariable in his practice: not in repeating the very same words, but in making similar repetitions, which, as I have said, is all that can be reasonably expected in any author.

The next instances adduced are those in which we have parenthetical expressions introduced after their commencing with the name either of Jehovah or Israel. One or two of these have been adduced above: we shall now merely confront these with a few taken from the earlier part of this prophet; which is all that can be necessary to prove, that the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Gesenius is groundless and false: *e. g.* chap. i. 24: “*Therefore, saith the Lord (the Lord of Hosts, the mighty One of Israel,) Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries,*” &c. Again, chap. vii. 20: “*In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired (by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria), the head,*” &c. Here, I observe, Dr. Gesenius himself has marked this passage as parenthetical: thus,—“*Zu selbiger Zeit wird der Herr mit einem Scheermesser, jenseit des Stromes gedungen (mit dem Könige von Assyrien) das Haupt, . . . scheeren,*” &c. “*At the same time shall the Lord shave, with a razor, hired beyond the stream (with the king of Assyria), the head,*” &c. The genuine Isaiah, therefore, is just as parenthetical as the pseudo-Isaiah. One example more of this sort shall suffice: chap. ix. 8, 11: “*The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. (And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.) Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him,*” &c. We will now take an example or two, in which Jacob or

* I have here made my own version, because it was my wish to retain, as much as possible, the phraseology of my author. The verb *בָּנָד* seems to be derived from *בָּנָד*, a garment or cloak, and hence to signify *cloaking* a matter, giving it a false appearance, something like the wolves of the New Testament, in sheep's clothing.

Israel forms the leading word or subject, chap. xxvii. 9: "By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin; (when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder); the groves and images shall not stand up." Again, chap. xxx. 1—3: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord (that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; that go down to Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt)! *Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,*" &c.

SECTION V.

ON THE CHALDAISMS SAID TO OCCUR IN THE LAST TWENTY-SIX
CHAPTERS OF ISAIAH.

LET us now come to the Chaldaisms and Syriasms said to be found in this latter part of Isaiah, which, as Dr. Gesenius is a grammarian of considerable celebrity, call for particular attention; for, if it be true, as Dr. Gesenius thinks he has proved it to be, that we have words, forms of words, and phrases, in this portion of Isaiah, not to be found in any of the earlier parts of the Bible, and which must have been learned in Chaldea, it may become probable, that this part of the prophecy was written at a later date than the preceding part. The first word taken is **קָרָא**, used in an absolute sense, and signifying to *preach*, or *foretell*, as in chap. xl. 2. xlv. 7. lviii. 1; Jonah, i. 2; Zech. viii. (vii.) 7. (Einleitung, p. 24. Zweyter Theil.)

I deny, in the first place, that this word means to *predict*, in any one of the passages cited. In chap. xlv. 7, the only place that can be supposed to have this signification, the terms **מְשׁוּמֵי עַם-עוֹלָם**, "*since I appointed the ancient people,*" supplies a sense of futurity to the context, and not the verb **קָרָא**, which retains its own proper meaning, to *proclaim*, just as the others, **נָבִיא** and **נִצְרָה**, do theirs. And I will affirm, that no one passage can be adduced from the Hebrew Bible, in which this verb signifies to *foretell*, independently of some

other consideration. Let us, in the second place, see whether this verb occurs, or not, in any of the earlier books of the Bible, in the sense here ascribed to it. In Gen. xxxix. 14. we have וַיִּקְרָא בְקוֹל גָּדוֹל, “and I cried (out) with a loud voice:” so also in the next and the 18th verses. Here then the verb is used in an *absolute* sense, and one equivalent to *proclaim*, &c. Levit. xiii. 45, שָׁמָּא יִקְרָא, “shall cry (or proclaim) unclean;” Exod. xxiv. 7, וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנוֹי הָעָם, “he read (proclaimed or preached) in the ears of the people;” *ib.* xxxiv. 6, וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, “and Jehovah cried (preached or proclaimed), Jehovah is a merciful and gracious God;”* Levit. xxiii. 21, וַיִּקְרָאֵם—מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ, “and ye shall proclaim . . a holy convocation;” *ib.* xxv. 10, וַיִּקְרָאֵם, דְּרֹר, “and ye shall proclaim liberty.” Similar passages may be cited from almost every book in the Hebrew Bible; one or two, however, from the genuine Isaiah, shall suffice here: chap. xxi. 8, וַיִּקְרָא אֲרִיָּה, “and he cried (or proclaimed), A lion.” I should prefer, *and a hero* (lion-like man) *proclaimed*. Nothing is more common in the East, than to term a warlike man *a lion*. The introduction of a lion here in any other sense seems quite foreign to the context; and, as this word stands in the place proper for the nominative to the verb, it will be difficult to assign any good reason why it should not so be taken. See also chap. xxxvi. 13. vi. 3, 4. xxx. 7. xxxvi. 13, &c. In our first word קָרָא, therefore, we have no Chaldaic, Syriac, or otherwise strange, usage; on the contrary, the verb occurs in its usual and natural sense: the only anomaly discoverable on the subject is, the new signification ascribed to it by Dr. Gesenius.

The next word said to be used in a modern sense is חֲפֵץ, in the sense of *will*, *occupation*, *object of care*, and the like: certain passages occurring in the latter part of Isaiah, in Ecclesiastes, and Job, are then adduced to shew, that it (חֲפֵץ) is here used in the sense of the Syriac ܚܦܥܬܐ *thing*, *matter*, &c.; and hence is inferred its Chaldaic usage. I answer, after the most painful examination I have been able to give these passages, I have been able to find only four,

* This passage is erroneously translated in our authorised version. See my Heb. Gram. p. 285. I now prefer, however, taking the first יְהוָה as the nominative to the verb, contrary to the authority of the accents.

viz. Eccles. iii. 1, 17. v. 7. viii. 6. in which ܕܡܬܐ can have the sense of the Syriac ܕܡܬܐ, *thing*, or *matter*. And, if this book was composed by Solomon, which is most probably the case, this signification of the word cannot be adduced to prove, that it must have prevailed only near the end of the captivity. The sense given to it in Isaiah, xlv. 28, &c., as also in Job, xxi. 21, &c., is that in which it is found in 1 Sam. xviii. 25; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; 1 Kings, v. 8; Prov. iii. 15. viii. 13. xxxi. 13; Hos. viii. 8. The word does not indeed occur as a noun in the earlier part of Isaiah; it occurs, nevertheless, as a verb, in its usual acceptation, chap. i. 11. xiii. 17; as it also does in Hos. vi. 6, &c. Nothing, therefore, as far as I can see, can be affirmed of the Chaldaic usage of this word, in any part of the Bible. If it had the sense of the Syriac ܕܡܬܐ, *matter*, *thing*, in the times of Solomon, our question will stand unaffected by this circumstance, although the word occur no where in Isaiah in that sense. As well might it be argued, that the English word *choose* contains a Gallicism, because the French word *chose* happens to signify a *thing*, *affair*, &c.; both the Hebrew and Syriac word above mentioned having that signification (*i. e. wish, choose*;) when used as verbs.

The word עָבַד is said, in the next place, to be used in the sense of *servitude due to a landlord* (Frohdienst), or *slavery* (Sclavenleben). The passages cited are Is. xl. 2; Dan. x. 1; Job. vii. 1. x. 17. xiv. 14: but in none of these passages is it at all necessary to give either of these senses to the context. The primary signification of this word seems to be *arrangement, order*, &c.; and hence it is applied to a host either of men, or of the heavenly bodies: it is therefore equivalent to the Greek κόσμος, and is occasionally so rendered by the authors of the Septuagint.* Hence, also, it is applied to military proceedings, as warfare, &c. In Is. xl. 2, it has (*i. e.* עָבַדָּהּ) been, therefore, rendered *warfare*; "*her warfare is accomplished*." And perhaps no good reason can be assigned why this should be changed into *servitude*, as Dr. Gesenius will have it. In Dan. x. 1, the phrase עָבַד גָּדוֹל could hardly be rendered by *great servitude*, particu-

* Gen. ii. 1. πᾶς ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν. Heb. עָבַדָּהּ. Auth. Vers.: "*All the host of them*."

larly when we find it in connection with אִמֶּת הַדָּבָר, *true is the matter*, and יָבִין אֶת־הַדָּבָר, *and he understood the thing*. One would be tempted to suppose, that *great* (was) *the arrangement, apparatus, or the like*, is the sense intended to be conveyed, which will well suit the accompanying context. Our translators have taken, "*the time appointed* was long," which seems to me to be very wide of the mark. But, be this as it may, certainly *great servitude* will be most incongruous, ungrounded, and unnecessary. Let us now turn to Job, vii. 1. הֲלֹא־צָבָא לְאִנוּשׁ : "is there not a *warfare* to man?" &c. So reads our version in the margin; but in the text, "Is there not an *appointed time* to man?" &c. Why then, it may be asked, should *servitude* here be substituted, when the etymology, the context, and the usage of antiquity, is on the side of the other signification? In Job, x. 17. *servitude* will, if possible, be still less suitable to the context, which runs thus: "Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and (צָבָא) *war* are against me." In chap. xiv. 14. the context is, כָּל־יְמֵי צָבָאִי אֵיחָל, "all the days of my *warfare* will I wait." If we substitute *servitude* (to some feudal lord), or *hard slavery*, then shall we put Job into a situation, which, notwithstanding all his calamities, he never filled.

We have now gone over all the passages adduced, in which the word צָבָא has been said to have a Chaldean signification; not one of which will bear out the assertion. But has this word any such sense in the Chaldaic or Syriac? No such thing. Buxtorf* will assure us, that in Chaldee it is used in the significations just noticed; and, in the Syriac, it has quite a different one, as we may see in Castell.† The whole, therefore, is a mere fiction, as unworthy of the object for which it has been framed, as it is unfavourable to the reputation of its author, either for patience of investigation, or soundness of decision.

The next word adverted to, is עָמַר (*aufstreten*, to arise, &c.), used, as it is affirmed, in the sense of קָם, *to arise*. The passages cited are Is. xlvii. 13; Dan. viii. 23. xi. 2, 3, 20. xii. 1, 13; Eccles. iv. 15; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Here I think, Dr. Gesenius has, as before, unhappily misled himself. It is

* See his Chaldaic, Rabbinic, &c. Lexicon, *sub voce*.

† Lexicon Heptaglotton.

very true, we may, in many instances, translate this word עָמַד by the sense proper for קוּם, and no violence will appear to be done to the context; but in this we are by no means confined to the passages just cited. The truth is, Josh. xxi. 42. xxiii. 9; 2 Sam. xx. 11, 12; Is. iii. 13. xi. 10, with many other places, may be so translated, without doing any apparent injury to the context. The same may be done with almost any words which are nearly synonymous; but this will be a very different thing from affording proof, that such words are truly synonymous. And this is precisely the case here: the proper signification of עָמַד is, *to stand*, including also the idea of *strength, firmness, stability*; which is also the signification most proper for it in all the instances just adduced, *e. g.* Is. xlvi. 13. נִעְמְדֵינָא, *let them stand** (firmly), and let them save thee. So also in verse 12, עֲמְדֵינָא † *Stand* (fast) now with thy enchantments, &c. Dan. viii. 23, נִעְמַד מֶלֶךְ עִירָא, a king powerful in countenance ‡ *shall stand* (firmly). So xi. 2, שְׁלֹשָׁה מְלָכִים עֲמִידִים, *three kings shall stand* (firmly); xii. 1, נִעְמַד מִיכָאֵל, *Michael shall stand*; ib. הָעֹמֵד, *he who standeth up*; and verse 13, וְתִעְמַד, *and thou shalt stand*. Eccles. iv. 15, אֲשֶׁר יִעְמַד בְּחַדְתּוֹ, *who standeth in his stead*. 1 Chron. xxi. 1, וַיִּעְמַד שָׁטָן עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, *and Satan stood up* against Israel. There does not appear, therefore, any good reason, from these passages, why we should recur to the sense of קוּם, *arise*, in order to translate them intelligibly and well. There are, however, cogent reasons why we should not ascribe to this verb the sense of קוּם. One is, that there are various passages in the Bible to which this sense cannot be applied; another, the etymology of the word itself. With regard to the first, we have, in Exodus, xxxiii. 9, וַיֵּרֶד עַמּוּד הָעָנָן וַעֲמַד פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל, *The pillar of the cloud descended, and stood* at the door of the

* Dr. Gesenius gives here in his translation: "*So lass denn auftreten.*" *So then let step forward, arise, &c.*

† But in verse 12: "*Beharre denn.*" *Persevere, remain, then, &c.*; which is not the sense of קוּם.

‡ This, Mr. Bertholdt says, means *barbarous, barbarisch*, which he cites Deut. xxviii. 50. to prove: no proof, however, can be derived from that place, except that the nation so mentioned shall utterly overcome the Jews: and this we know was done by the Chaldeans, a powerful, but not a *barbarous*, people. Bertholdt's Daniel . . . neu übersetzt, &c. Erlangen, 1808. Zweite Hälfte, p. 534; a work more daring, and worse supported, if possible, than that we are now considering.

tabernacle; where, I think, *arose* at the door of the tabernacle, would be nonsense. See also Josh. x. 13; 2 Kings, xv. 20; Is. xlvi. 7, where the following, לֹא יָמִישׁ, *he shall not remove*, is sufficient to fix the sense of יַעֲמֹד,* *he shall stand*. See also *ib.* lxvi. 22.† So in the former part of this prophet, chap. x. 32. xxi. 6. xxxvi. 2, 13: and to these many others might be added.

Let us now come to the etymology. If we turn to the Hebrew Lexicon, we shall find the root (עמד) followed by הָעֵמֹד, *he set up, constituted, established; עמוד, a pillar*, as in the instance above given; עִמּוּדָה, *subsistence, a place in which one may remain, &c.*; מַעְמָד, *a station, &c.* These significations easily and naturally flow from the primitive signification above given. Eichhorn, however, in his edition of the Lexicon of Simonis, directs it to be compared with the Arabic قَام Heb. קָיָם, with which it is apparently synonymous. But Winer has, in the last edition, very properly struck this out, retaining only its parallel Arabic word عَمَد. I shall not detain the reader with the significations given to the Arabic root; these he may see in Golius and Castell: I will merely affirm, that they are in perfect harmony with the significations just given; and the same will be found to be the case in the Ethiopic and Samaritan, as far at least as the word is used. According to Castell and Buxtorf, it may occasionally be rendered in the Chaldee by *rise, arise, &c.* But there seems, from the passages adduced, to be no real necessity for this; and, in others, *to stand, persevere*, or the like, is manifestly the only sense which can fairly be ascribed to it. In the Syriac, ܐܡܘܕܐ, *amūdō* signifies *a pillar*, as in the Hebrew; but why the verb ܐܡܕܐ, *āmād*, has been used in the sense of baptizing, none have been able to say. The real solution of this difficulty is, the Syrians *confirm* their children at the time of their baptism: the rite, therefore, is termed, not *baptism*, but *confirmation*, ܡܚܡܘܕܐ, *mahmūdītho*, which will account for the use of this word. The learned conjectures, therefore, of Michaelis on this subject may now be disre-

* So Dr. Gesenius in his translation, "*Da steht er.*" *There he stands, &c.*

† Heb. עֹמְדִים לִפְנֵי. Dr. Ges. "*Vor mir bestehn.*" *To stand before me.* *Ib.* יַעֲמֹד. Dr. Ges. "*So besteht auch.*" *So also stands, &c.*

garded.* In every case, therefore, the primitive sense of this root obtains : nor are there any passages which have yet come to my knowledge, where it is at all necessary to recur to the sense of קָיָם, not excepting the Chaldee itself, which perhaps suggested to Dr. Gesenius the desirableness of making this word fall in with the root קָיָם.

Our next criticism is on the word בָּחַר, *bākhār*, which is said to occur in the sense of the Syriac כָּחַ, *behār*, to *prove, approve*, &c. The passages cited by way of proof are, Is. xlviii. 10. Job, xxxiv. 4. Here, I am sorry to say, we are situated just as we were in the last article: a little obscurity is thrown over the whole matter in the outset, and then a conclusion is hastily drawn in favour of the hypothesis assumed. But let us see how the question really stands. In the Syriac and Chaldaic this verb is used in two senses, which, however, may often be put to mean the same thing. The first is, *to try, prove*, &c. as in metals or the like; the second, *to approve, make choice of*, and so on. The sense usually applied in the Hebrew is the *second* of these; but Dr. Gesenius finds two places in which he thinks the first is the most suitable. One of these is, Is. xlviii. 10, הִנֵּה צָרַפְתִּיךָ וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף בָּחַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹר עֲנִי, which our version renders: "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with (marg. *for*) silver; *I have chosen* thee in the furnace of affliction." Dr. Gesenius has, "Siehe, ich habe dich geschmolzen, aber kein Silber gewonnen, dich *geprüft* im Ofen des Elends." Behold, I have fused thee, but have not obtained silver; *have proved thee* in the furnace of affliction. I object to this interpretation, because it is inconsistent with itself. Let us pursue the question with Dr. Gesenius's view of it, and suppose that allusion is here made to the fusing of metals, in order to their being purified. We shall have, therefore, Behold, I have fused thee, but have failed in the end; in the furnace of affliction I have proved thee; *i. e.* either that thou art good or bad. But it cannot be, that thou art *good*, for this will contradict the first part of the passage: and yet this is the sense which בָּחַר, even in Chaldee or Syriac, properly requires: *i. e.* after investigation had, to choose the best of any thing. But, if the passage

* See also the Kamoos under the word عَمَد, where the Syriac usage of this word is well explained.

means, that Israel, upon trial, even in the furnace of affliction, is found to be *bad*; then we have a sense contradictory to the general context of the Bible, which goes to shew that, it was by affliction alone, they were made any thing like good. So Zechariah, chap. xiii. 9. “I will bring the third part through the fire, and *will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people,*” &c. Where it is remarkable, that although Zechariah is one of the prophets who lived at the end of the captivity, he does not use the word *בָּחַר* here, but *בָּחַן*, which in Hebrew properly signifies *to try* or *prove*. A similar sentiment is found in the early part of Isaiah, viz. chap. i. 25. “I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely *purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness,*” &c. It will not now be necessary to consider Dr. Gesenius’s note in page 118, on the passage in question, where he says that the particle *בְּ* *with, for, &c.* has here the sense of *בְּ*, *like, according to, &c.* because, if the version is, after all, inconsistent, which I have shewn to be the case, it cannot be necessary to consider its several parts. Let us now see what the passage really means. Our authorised version has, as we have seen, “I have refined thee, but not with (or for) silver; *I have chosen thee* in the furnace of affliction.” The version with the marginal reading “*for,*” I prefer; and I have no doubt, this gives the true sense of the verse, which I would thus paraphrase: *I have purged thee, but without the hope of finding in thee the purity and worth of silver, so as to receive a just return: and, indeed, when in thy first furnace of affliction, namely Egypt, worthless and poor as thou then wast, I chose thee to be my people.* Then in the following verse we have, in strict conformity with this, “for mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it,” &c. The passage, therefore, is perfectly consistent and at unity with itself, if we take *בָּחַר* in the sense of *choosing* here: but not so, if we employ Dr. Gesenius’s amended and unusual sense *to try, examine*. It is remarkable enough, moreover, that this word occurs several times in the latter part of Isaiah, where, nevertheless, Dr. Gesenius himself has not ventured to give it this new sense, *e. g.* chap. xli. 8, 9. xliii. 10. xlv. 1, 2.

lvi. 4. lviii. 5, 6. lxv. 12. lxvi. 3, 4. It is strange that this prophet should use this word only *once* (allowing Dr. Gesenius's views to be just) in the Syriac sense, and apply it, moreover, so frequently in that peculiar to the Hebrews. There is surely something very marvellous in this; but we need not trouble ourselves much on the subject; the whole is groundless; and the wonder accordingly vanishes. After what has been said, it cannot be necessary to examine the passage adduced from Job. The authorised version here may be consulted, and it may be relied upon.

Our next animadversions are on the word גָּשָׁשׁ, *gāshāsh*, which is equivalent to the Syriac ܓܫܐ *gash*, signifying *to touch, grope*, used in Is. lix. 10. as it is said, for the otherwise usual מָשַׁשׁ, *māshāsh*. My reply is: Nothing can be more certain than that גָּשָׁשׁ, *gāshāsh*, and מָשַׁשׁ, *māshāsh*, are not perfectly synonymous, although all the weight of Dr. Gesenius's criticism rests upon the supposition that they are. The verb גָּשָׁשׁ, with its Syriac and Arabic synonyme ܝܓܫܐ and ܝܓܫܐ, *jassa*, signifies, as every one will see, who will take the trouble to make the inquiry, to *grope after, feel for, &c.* with a view to discover something; and, in this sense, it is cognate with נָגַשׁ, *nāgāsh*, to *draw near*; while מָשַׁשׁ, with the Syriac or Chaldaic, and Arabic, ܡܫܫܐ and ܡܫܫܐ, *mūsh*, and *massa*, signifies properly *to feel or touch*, as a mere verb of sense; but which also may imply, that this is done with a view to *inquiry, discovery*, or the like. So Gen. xxvii. 21: "Come near, *that I may feel thee* (וַאֲמַשְׁךָ), my son, whether thou be," &c. Ib. xxxi. 37: "Whereas *thou hast felt* (מִשְׁשָׁתָּה, where the authorised version has *searched*, which is too free) all my stuff, what hast thou found? &c." But, in Is. lix. 10. we have, נִגְשָׁשׁהּ בְּעוֹרֵים קִיר, *we grope for the wall, &c.*, *i. e.* we feel or touch about, in order that we may find the wall, &c.: not, we feel, or touch, the wall, in order to discover any *thing relating to it*; which is the force of the other verb. It is not meant to be asserted, however, that both the Syrians and Chaldeans do not occasionally use the verb ܓܫܐ, *gash*, in the sense of מָשַׁשׁ; but it is, that Isaiah does this: and also, that these words are

synonymous in their primitive and classical use; and I will maintain, that the true distinction of them is still preserved mostly in the Arabic, and always in the Hebrew, language.

“جَسَّ (jassa), Heb. מָשַׁח, *i. q.* מָסَّ (*i. e.* מָשַׁח. This I deny.)

The following is the explanation of both, as given by Golius: Tetigit, palpavit,—*quasi palpando inquisivit et cognoscere studuit, ut venam agroti.* Captavit exploravitque *nuncium: uti explorator*—جَوَّاسٌ and جَاسُوسٌ, Chald. מַשְׁחָא, Captator

nuncii, explorator. מַשְׁחָא, Locus ubi quid palpatur explora-

turque, *ut à medico agri pulsus.*” In practice, the sense of this verb is, *to inquire, seek or spy out*, &c.; and I greatly doubt whether it ever occurs in the sense of *feel*, or any thing

like it. Again, under מָסַח, *massa*, we have, “tetigit, palpavit—propinqua, proximè juncta. (Metaphorically) Curæ ac cordi fuit, (*i. e.* it touched the heart), &c. So in the

derivatives, מָס contactus, מָש tangens, מָסִים mu-

tuus contactus, מַשְׁחָא tactus, *pec. affectus furore.* The

primitive and obvious sense, therefore, of these two words is, respectively, to *touch*, (*i. e.* מָשַׁח), and to *feel*, (מָשַׁח), both of which are, however, applicable in the sense of *inquiry, discovery*, &c.; *i. e.* the first to inquire after a thing, the second to examine it when found. So in English we may say, a blind man *feels* (מָשַׁח) a person or thing, in order to assure himself of some particulars relating to him or it; or, he may be said to *feel about, grope about, touch one thing after another* (מָשַׁח), in order to find something for which he is in quest; without at all implying that *groping, touching, feeling about*, are at all synonymous with the strict sense of the verb *feel*. And this, as far as I can discover, is precisely the state of the case with regard to the verbs מָשַׁח מָשַׁח, and מָשַׁח מָשַׁח, with their Syriac, Chaldaic, and Arabic synonymes. Dr. Gesenius, however, unhappily confounds the whole, and then condemns Isaiah for using the latter of these words in a sense, which he (Dr. Gesenius) has erroneously ascribed to it. This critique, therefore, is much of a piece with the preceding ones.

Our next question is, on the word מָשַׁח, as occurring in

Is. liv. 15. in the Chaldaïc usage and sense *when, if, (wenn)*. Dr. Gesenius, however, has not so translated it in this place, but by “*und*” (and); and we are told in the note, “*הֵן* nehme *ich* für *wenn*, im chaldaisirenden style, ugl. bes. 2 Chron. vii. 13. wo es mit *אם* alternirt;” *i. e.* I take *הֵן* in the sense of *when, if*, in the style of those who Chaldaïse, as in 2 Chron. vii. 13, where it alternates with *אם*.* Dr. Gesenius is surely at liberty to say in his note, I take this particle in this or that sense; but it will not hence follow, that he is to pronounce this word to be Chaldaïc, without giving proof that it is so. He has, however, appealed to the books of Chronicles, Daniel, and Job, to shew that this word there occurs in the sense which he has ascribed to it. I only ask, Why did he not also appeal to the books of Exodus and Leviticus, where it happens to occur in the same sense? omitting the question for the present, whether this sense is suitable or not to the passage in Isaiah. Exod. iv. 1. *וְהָן* *לֹא-יִאֱמִינוּ* לי, and, *when, or if*, they will *not believe me*, &c. I doubt whether our version is here correct. *Ib.* viii. 22. *הֵן* *נִזְבַּח*, *if*, or putting the case that, *we sacrifice*, &c. (v. 26, auth. vers. “*lo, shall we*,” which is not suitable). Lev. xxv. 20. *הֵן* *לֹא נִזְרַע*, *when, or if*, *we sow not*. The books of Exodus and Leviticus, therefore, Chaldaïse just as much, though not so often, as the books of Daniel, Job, Chronicles, &c. ! This goes on the supposition that Dr. Gesenius has ascribed the true signification to this particle in Is. liv. 15. But there

* Winer, I see, has enriched his late edition of the Lexicon of Simonis with this exquisite piece of criticism (p. 261): *הֵן*, *si*, in recentioribus potissimum libris, qui Chaldaicæ linguæ indolem redolent, 2 Chron. vii. 13. (ubi sq. *אם*) Job. xl. 23. Jer. iii. 1. Jes. liv. 15. Yet, when he proceeds to explain, he translates it in these passages by *en*. So, after all, it has no such Chaldaïc sense ! I may perhaps here be allowed to offer my solution of the force of this particle. I suppose, then, that it is equivalent to the Arabic *وَأَنَّ* or *وَأَنَّ*, which signify primarily, *surely, truly*, &c. Having the force, therefore, of a strong asseveration, they may occasionally be taken in the sense of *en, ecce, behold*; at other times, when a case is put, and some consequence deduced, *if* will express their force with us; although this is not the real signification of the particle. The same is the case with *אם*, as shewn in my Hebrew Grammar (p. 376, 7). And hence it is that *הֵן*, and *אם* are sometimes found in the same context; but not because *הֵן* has taken any Chaldaïc signification.

is not the slightest ground for supposing this to be the case; and the truth is, Dr. Gesenius has not so translated the passage himself. Our authorised version, with Noldius who is no mean authority, takes it here in the sense of *behold*; as do also the Septuagint, the Targum of Jonathan, the Latin Vulgate, and the Arabic, among the ancient versions. We have here, therefore, the most respectable authorities joining with Dr. Gesenius, to condemn both his criticism and his note in this particular!

We have, in the next place, in Isaiah, lxvi. 19 (18), the Chaldaic combination *הַגּוֹיִם וְהַלְשׁוֹנוֹת*, *nations and tongues*; which we are told is also found in Dan. iii. 4, &c.; Apocalypse, v. 9, &c. &c. In Daniel, however, the phrase is a little different from this, viz. *עַמֵּי אֲמִיָּה וְלִשְׁנָיָה*. I remark this merely to shew, that the phrases here referred to, are not quite identical with that in Isaiah, although the phraseology may be allowed to be in the main the same. But why, let it be asked, did not Dr. Gesenius refer also to the book of Genesis, where this phraseology is given repeatedly? In chap. x. 5, we have in pure Hebrew, *אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי לְשׁוֹנוֹ לְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ בְּגוֹיָהֶם*, “every one after his *tongue*, after their families, in their nations.” The same phraseology, though not identical in words, occurs also *ib.* in verses 20 and 31. It has been remarked, that the passages referred to in Daniel do not contain combinations perfectly identical with that in Isaiah; neither do these: still they exhibit the same phraseology, and that nearer even in words than the passages pointed out by our German grammarian. In the Commentary, however, (p. 309), these passages are pointed out as occurring in the ancient Hebrew, and synonymous with those in Daniel, and with that in Isaiah; and yet it is argued in the Introduction, that this phrase is one among many proofs, that the latter part of Isaiah must have been written about the end of the Babylonian captivity! Will not these passages in Genesis also prove, that they must have been written at the same time? Dr. Gesenius intends no such thing; his object here is merely to destroy the pseudo-Isaiah!

Our next business will be with the word *יֵתֶר*, *remainder*, *excess*, &c. which is said to occur in a Chaldaic sense in Isaiah, lvi. 12. lxi. 10. (in the last it does not occur),

and in Dan. viii. 9, &c. The first passage runs thus: יָתֵר גְּדוֹל מְאֹד, *exceedingly great excess*, or *exceedingly excessive*: not, “and much more abundant,” as the older interpreters have taken it: for we have no conjunction *and*. The assertion is, that the morrow shall be as excessive as the present day; *i. e.* abound in as great plenty. In this point of view, there is nothing strange or Chaldaïc in the construction: the word is put to denote *excess*, which is its usual signification, as may be seen in Gen. xlix. 3; Exod. x. 5; Num. xxxi. 32, &c. &c. Dr. Gesenius, has, therefore, only misled himself here, as on some other occasions.

The next question is about the verb פָּהַן, which is generally used in the Hebrew Bible in the sense of, *becoming a priest, to officiate or act as a priest*, as in Exod. xxix. 1, 44. xxx. 30; Lev. vii. 35, &c. Here, however, (Isaiah, lxi. 10), according to Dr. Gesenius, who follows De Dieu, it has the sense of the Syriac כָּתַן, *to be splendid, fortunate, &c.* Now, suppose we allow this, will it hence follow that this usage was modern among the Hebrews? I believe it will not; for we have pure Chaldee or Syriac in the book of Genesis itself, (xxx. 47.) But, it is by no means necessary to have recourse to this expedient. The passage is יִכְהֶן יְכָהֵן פָּאֵר, which our version naturally enough renders in the margin, “as a bridegroom *decketh as a priest* with ornaments.” The last word פָּאֵר is generally taken now to signify some kind of head-dress; but, from its connection in this place, it seems rather to signify a splendid dress generally. We know that the dress of the priests was rich and splendid; and why allusion may not thus be made to it,—particularly when *the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness*, are mentioned in connection, evidently alluding to the services, duties, and hopes, inculcated by religion,—no good reason can perhaps be given. The Septuagint has ὡς νυμφίῳ περιέθηκε μοι μίτραν, *as a bridegroom he has put about me (my head) a mitre*; where allusion seems to be made to the mitre or bonnet of the priests. The Targum has: *as a bridegroom who is happy in his chamber, and like the high priest who is adorned with his vestments*. The Vulgate has: *quasi sponsum decoratum coronâ*, &c. There is, perhaps, no good reason, therefore, for adopting Dr. Gesenius’s interpretation; and, if so, his

criticism falls to the ground: Dr. Winer is of the same opinion. (See his edition of the *Lexicon of Simonis*, *sub voce* כהן.)

The word next chosen for animadversion is בּוֹל, as occurring in Isaiah, xlv. 19, in the Chaldee signification of *block, lump, &c.* Our version has, “shall I fall down to the stock of a tree (בּוֹל)?” Former interpreters supposed this word to have been formed by an aphæresis of י from the word יבּוֹל, *increase, &c.* as in Judg. vi. 4, where we have יבּוֹל הָאָרֶץ, *the increase, or produce of the earth*; but in Job, xl. 20, יבּוֹל הָרִים for בּוֹל הָרִים, *produce of the mountains*. Hence too in Isaiah, xlv. 19, it has been supposed, that לְבִיל עֵץ אֲסָגוֹד must mean, *shall I worship the increase, produce, &c. of wood or a tree?* i. e. *what a tree has produced, a mere wooden idol?* No, says Mr. Rosenmüller; and to this accedes Dr. Gesenius: “simplicius videtur, בּוֹל capere significatu Chaldæis usitato: *frustum, massa,*” &c. (Schol. in loc.) Now, I say: If it can be shewn that this word was used by the Chaldeans in the times of Isaiah, or about the end of the captivity, then may this conjecture have some weight. But no such thing can be shewn; the oldest usage of this word can be traced no higher than some part or other of the Talmud, and hence Buxtorf was of opinion, that it had been taken from the Greek βῶλος or βῶλον, *gleba: item massa*. (Talm. Lex. p. 271.) And it is remarkable enough, that the Chaldee paraphrast, who, perhaps, knew his own language quite as well as Mr. Rosenmüller does, has not used this celebrated Chaldaïc word, but has retained the Hebrew one above mentioned, *e. g.* לְיִבְלִי אֲעָא אֲסָגוֹד, where the radical י of the root יבּל, from which we evidently have יבּוֹל and בּוֹל above, is retained. In all human probability, therefore, this Chaldaïc (Greek) word never saw the times of the captivity, nor even those of the paraphrast Jonathan; yet this mongrel modern word is, in the estimation of our very scientific modern critics, quite sufficient to condemn a part of the prophecy of Isaiah to recent times, and also to brand it with the character of a forgery! I say no more on this point.

The next Chaldaïsism, stigmatised in this prophet, is the modern use of the definite article הַ, *the*, in the sense of the relative *who*, &c. occurring in chap. lvi. 3, &c., and as shewn in Dr. Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar. I am not sorry that

Dr. Gesenius has here mentioned his Grammar, because it will afford me an opportunity of shewing, how much reliance can be placed on this work, in questions relating in any degree to the rationalism of Germany; and also, of remarking to what an extent this system has been driven.

It should be observed, this use of the particle (ה) is not here condemned as being Chaldaïc, but only because it is said to be modern. If, however, we can shew, that it occurs in the oldest books of the Hebrew Bible, nothing further can be necessary for the refutation of this doctrine. We have this use then of the particle with verbs, in Gen. xxi. 3. הַנּוֹלֵד, *who had been born*; xxvii. 33. הַצֹּדֵד צִיד, *who hath hunted a hunting*; xlv. 27. הַבָּאָה מִצְרַיִם, *which had come to Egypt*; Deut. xx. 8. הָאִישׁ הַיָּרֵא, *the man who feareth*; ib. ver. 11. הָעָם הַנִּמְצָא, *the people who are found*. Dr. Gesenius's Grammar will furnish us with an instance from Joshua, in chap. x. 24. הַהֹלְכוֹת אִתּוֹ, *who walked with him*; as also from 1 Sam. ix. 24; 1 Kings, xiii. 33. Of instances, in which the article occurs in this sense with participles, Noldius (Concord. Part. p. 214) gives seven in the book of Genesis; eleven in Exodus; in Leviticus twenty-three; in Numbers four, and so on, in places too numerous to cite. If it be replied, that many of the first of these instances may be shewn to be verbal nouns, and, therefore, inadequate to prove the occurrence of this particle with verbs, I answer: According to Dr. Gesenius's system of grammar, participles, and participial nouns, are as much verbs as any other forms possibly can be. Many of the instances, however, exhibit, to all intents and purposes, verbs in the state of conjugation, as in Josh. x. 24. הַהֹלְכוֹת, &c.; and it will require powers greater than any possessed by Dr. Gesenius to shew, that these books were written, either during, or since, the times of the captivity. On my system of grammar, indeed, verbs are nothing more than nouns generally conjugated with the personal pronouns; and, in this point of view, the occurrence of the article in conjunction with them, is perfectly analogical and regular: and so it appears in Genesis, &c. with participles, &c. just as one would expect. But, in the Chaldee or Syriac, this usage never can occur; for this reason: because the definite article is, with them, never placed at the beginning, but at the end of words. Were it, therefore, joined to the end of a Chaldaïc or Syriac verb, the

confusion it would introduce would be ruinous to all distinction of the pronominal terminations. The practice alluded to, therefore, cannot be Chaldaic ; nor is it either modern or anomalous.

Let us now notice a few instances in which this doctrine is laid down and exemplified in Dr. Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar. (*Lehregebäude der Hebraischen Sprache*, p. 133). After being informed that *dāgēsh* will sometimes supply the loss of a letter in the Hebrew, as well as in the Chaldee language, we are told that, "*Von diesem Chaldaismus finden sich im spätern Hebraismus wenigstens einige Beispiele.*" Of this Chaldaism some examples at least are found in the more modern Hebrew. We then have a passage from Job, xviii. 2, where we have יָקָרְךָ for יָקָרְךָ, *extremities*, i. e. we have a ך introduced in order to supply the place of *dāgēsh*. Nothing, surely, can be more easy than to form such a rule as this, and then to condemn every writer, who happens to have followed it, either as modern, or his work as a forgery. I would only ask, Why might not the author of the book of Job have written in Chaldee before the captivity as well as after it? Has it ever been proved, that access could not be had to the Chaldee, but by means of the captivity? Or, that no Chaldee existed before this period? No such thing. The Hebrew, we know, prevailed in Palestine during the residence of the Israelites there; but Hebrew was not, in all probability, their mother tongue. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees; Laban evidently spoke in the Chaldee,* and probably was ignorant of the Hebrew. And if Job was a descendant of Abraham, and did not reside in Palestine, Where can be the improbability of his having used Chaldean words, phrases, and constructions, at a period prior to the giving of the Law from Sinai? It appears most probable to me, that he did so; and the wonder ought to be, why he has used so few. Nothing can, I know, be more easy than to lay down such rules as that just noticed: but it is a more marvellous thing to me, how men, who make such loud pretensions to philosophy, &c. &c. can be found so willing to follow them.

Let us now turn to another place of the *Lehregebäude*, (p. 370), where we have יָקָר and the plural יָקָרִים pointed out as Chaldaisms, and where it is intended, of course, to stigmatise

* Gen. xxxi. 47.

the books in which they are found as modern. From some chance or other, however, the places are not pointed out, which is rather strange. I will endeavour to supply this deficiency. Gen. xxiv. 48. וַיִּקְרָךְ, and *I bow down*; xliii. 28. וַיִּקְרָךְ, and *they bow down*; so also Exod. iv. 31, xii. 27, and xxxiv. 8. וַיִּקְרָךְ, and *he bows down*: so Gen. xxiv. 26; Num. xxii. 31, &c. And the remark of Winer is, “Non occurrit nisi fut.” *Kal*, יִקְרָךְ. (more Chald. Lex. Simonis sub voce קָרַךְ). According to our rule, therefore, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, &c. were all written by modern Hebrews (späte Hebræer), and some time after the captivity; if not, the rule of Dr. Gesenius must fall to the ground. I leave the reader to judge which case is the most probable.

We have in the next place מֵאֹתִי for מֵאֵתִי, Isa. xlv. 15. אֹתָם for אֵתָם, lix. 21, which confusion of one word for another, if we except the books of Kings and Jeremiah, occurs, as we are told, neither in the genuine Isaiah, nor in any other ancient prophet. I remark: Suppose we allow this to be the fact, what then? Why the pseudo-Isaiah has indulged in a practice, in *two* instances, not to be met with in the first thirty-nine chapters of the prophecy; but which is found to exist in the books of Kings and Jeremiah, all of which were, in all probability, written before the captivity. But this is not all; it is also to be found in the still more ancient books, notwithstanding Dr. Gesenius's assertion to the contrary. So Lev. xv. 18, 24. וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אִתָּהּ, “a man lie *with* her.” Josh. xiv. 12. אֵלֵי יְהוָה אֹתִי, “if so be the Lord be *with* me.” We have then the form אֹת instead of אֵת, in some of the older books at least; and our critic himself, it should seem, could find it occurring only twice in the latter part of Isaiah, which I have here shewn it does in the book of Leviticus alone.

In the next and last place, we have the Chaldaic form אֲנַלְתִּי for הִנַּלְתִּי in Isa. lxiii. 3, as well as some passages, in which the verb comes after its object, as in xlii. 24. xlix. 6. I answer: The first instance exhibits a Chaldee form, without doubt: and what is the consequence? Must it hence follow, that this writer flourished at or after the captivity? If so, then must the Chaldaisms already noticed in Genesis, Exodus, &c. prove that those books were also written in those times. But this is more than Dr. Gesenius

himself will allow : he only wishes to bring down his pseudo-Isaiah, the books of Job, Kings, and a few others, to those times : and, it is most unfortunate, his remarks must also be extended to other books. We have, however, this Chaldaïc form even in the genuine Isaiah, which, it is exceedingly strange, Dr. Gesenius should have overlooked. It occurs in chap. xix. 6. וְהָאֲנָחַרִּי קָהָרוּת, and the rivers have become putrid. Here, according to Altling (Fundam. Punct. p. 377), and Dr. Winer (Lex. Sim. root זָנָה), we have a form compounded of both the Chaldee *Aphel*, and the Hebrew *Hiphil*. I doubt this. I should be disposed to believe, that the ה prefixed is the article in the sense of *who, which* ; and that the verb has taken the Chaldaïc prefix, just as in that adduced from chap. lxiii. 3. If so, it ought to be translated thus, taking the following verb in connection : *And the rivers, which had become putrid, have failed, &c.* : or more literally, *And those which had become putrid (viz.) rivers, have failed, &c.* Dr. Gesenius refers us here to his Grammar, p. 463, and again from this place to p. 319, where he tells us, that this form is Chaldaïc, and peculiar to the Samaritans. After all, however, (at p. 463), he thinks it would be better to suppose it formed from an adjective of the form אֲזָנָה (like אֲזָרָה), or else, to consider the א as a *mater lectionis*. If we here allow this, I ask, Why may we not allow the same in the passage above cited, supposing the form אֲנָחַל once to have existed, just as we do that אֲזָנָה did ? and then we shall have Chaldee in neither of these places ! Or why may we not suppose that אֲנָל is the root, and that the second *alef* is a mere *mater lectionis* ? In this case, too, we shall have no Chaldee. But, then, this would ruin Dr. Gesenius's hypothesis ; and, therefore, it cannot be allowed ! I have stated my view already of the passage (xix. 6) ; and, in conformity therewith, I say, that the form in both cases is probably Chaldaïc ; but not, that the prophet must have lived either at or after the captivity, in order to account for this.

With regard to the second and last point, namely, the occurrence of the verb after its object ; if we can find examples of this sort in the book of Genesis and the genuine Isaiah, we shall perhaps do all that can reasonably be required, to shew that nothing can be deduced from this against

the last six and twenty chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah. Gen. xliii. 11. אָפּוּא זֹאת עָשׂוּ, now this *do*. ib. v. 12. וְכֶסֶף מְשֻׁנָּה, and silver double *take ye*. ib. תְּשׁוּבוּ — וְאֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַמְּשׁוּבָּ, and the silver returned . . . *return ye*. ib. v. 15. וּמִשְׁנֵה־כֶּסֶף, and double silver *they took*. ib. v. 21. וְכֶסֶף אֲחֵר הוֹרְדָנוּ, and *other silver have we brought down*. ib. v. 27. הַזֶּקֶן אֲשֶׁר, the old man of whom *ye spake*. These instances occur in one chapter only. Now let us turn to the first chapter of the genuine Isaiah, v. 1. חִזּוֹן יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּץ אֲשֶׁר, the vision of Isaiah the son of Amots *which he saw*. ib. v. 9. כַּמֶּעֶט פְּסֹדִים הָיִינוּ לְעִמָּרָה דְּמִינוּ, as (it were) a little like Sodom *had we been*, to Gomorrah *had we been likened*. ib. v. 11. לֹא חֲפָצְתִּי — חֵלֶב מְרִיאִים, the fat of fed beasts .. *I have not desired*. ib. v. 19. טוֹב הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, the good of the land *ye shall eat*. ib. v. 23. וְיָתוֹם לֹא יִשְׁפֹּטוּ, the orphan *they judge not*. It will be quite unnecessary to add any thing further on this subject. Every one who can read the Hebrew Bible at all, may collect thousands of instances of this kind. That Dr. Gesenius could have adduced such a circumstance, as characteristic of the style of the latter part of Isaiah exclusively, is with me a matter almost incredible. Nothing, surely, but an overweening desire to drive an hypothesis, could ever have induced him to risk such criticism as this: and perhaps I may say, nothing much better can be urged in defence of the other instances already noticed. How a gentleman of very considerable learning, unwearied industry, and possessing as fair a portion of liberality as men generally lay claim to, could have proposed such criticisms, I am at a loss to conceive. The only motive I will ascribe to him shall not be sought for in any supposed wish to obscure the truth; because, I have no doubt, the love of a favourite theory, together with a desire for discovery, is quite sufficient to account for it all. I will say, for myself, I trust my object has simply been, to arrive at the truth; not to controvert the statements of Dr. Gesenius. And, as the questions here discussed are of the greatest possible moment, if I have been betrayed into any mistake, I hope that either Dr. Gesenius, or some other person, will, for the sake of the best interests of society, refute all that may be amiss. According to my present views of this question, however, I am compelled to conclude, that the last six and twenty chapters of Isaiah

bear no marks whatever of a date more recent than may fairly be ascribed to the lifetime of the writer of the first thirty-nine: and further, that they are such in style, matter, and manner, as may have been expected to come from that writer; and, consequently, that they are worthy of all acceptance.

SECTION VI.

ON DR. GESENIUS'S INTERPRETATION OF PART OF CHAPTERS LII.
AND LIII. OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECY.

HAVING vindicated the latter part of Isaiah's prophecy, generally, from the aspersions cast on it; which, I am sorry to say, has required more time and labour than making them seems to have cost, let us now proceed to consider Dr. Gesenius's Comments on part of the 52d, and the whole of the 53d, chapter, with the view of ascertaining how far we ought either to reject or receive this very important part of Holy Writ, with regard to the doctrines respecting the Messiah. And here, it is not my intention to toil through all or even half of what Dr. Gesenius has written. My intention is merely to ascertain what his view of this very interesting prophecy is, and to consider the reasons which he proposes in support of it.

In p. 158, &c., of the second part (Zweyter Theil) of his work, we have the following statements on chap. lii. 13—liii. 12:—

Jehovah's servant, thus far deformed by suffering, and being an object of consternation, shall fill the people with joy; and kings shall honour him, when that which was unexpected has happened, (and) which no one, although foretold, would believe (lii. 13—15. liii. 1). God leaves him to grow up among the people, deserted, tormented, plagued (v. 2, 3), and sent him also with sufferings which he endured, as an offering of patient suffering (v. 7); but he suffered only for the sins of the people, which Jehovah laid upon him (v. 4—6). He escaped these sufferings by death; and, being sinless, was buried with criminals: none comprehended the real object of his sufferings (v. 8, 9). As a reward for that, he shall have long life, shall see his late

descendants, the spread of his doctrine shall delight him, and he shall divide the lot with the mighty (v. 10—12).

On the reasoning, it is added (*i. e.* respecting this matter), and on its general explanation, see the introduction, pp. 11, 12. The speaking of the prophet is here so changed for that of Jehovah, that, chap. lii. 13—15, Jehovah continues to speak as in the preceding context: in liii. 1, the prophet communicates in the name proper for his own station; ver. 2—9, he speaks in the name of the people; ver. 10, the prophet speaks of Jehovah in the third person; but ver. 11, 12, he introduces himself speaking. The sudden transition from the speaking of the prophet to that of Jehovah (ver. 10, 11) is in this book frequent, and cannot appear strange: it may seem somewhat bold, that the prophet, chap. liii. 11, should count himself among the publishers of a divine mission; and then, nevertheless, ver. 2, consider himself different from a servant of God, and still speak of this man in the third person. There is, however, an instance very like this in chap. lix. where, ver. 9—13, the prophet reckons himself among the people, and, moreover, styles their sins his own. Soon after, ver. 21, he addresses the prophet in the name of Jehovah: so also chap. xlii. 24, in one and the same verse “*Was it not Jehovah, against whom we sinned, on whose way THEY would not walk, nor hearken to his commandment?*” It would be very clear, if one would place in his mind, ver. 1, a small pause, which the subject certainly carries with it.

My first remark is: This is a most extraordinary way of treating any author. First, an interpretation is fixed authoritatively upon him; and then, we are told, that, however strange the transition of persons addressing or addressed may appear, still such things may be found in other parts of this writer: that is to say, similar constructions, however forced, may be put upon him in other places, and this is proof enough that such interpretations are just and good. Let us examine these cases singly. As Dr. Gesenius's version does not differ materially here from our own authorised one, I shall generally cite our English version when offering my remarks on his comment. In chap. lii. 13, we have: “*Behold, my servant,*” &c. Dr. Gesenius: “*Behold, my servant shall be fortunate,*” &c. The servant here mentioned is, according to

our comment, the prophet Isaiah. I ask : Does the nature of the case make it improbable that any other person can be meant ? The people of Israel generally are, as Dr. Gesenius has allowed, elsewhere termed *Jehovah's servant* or *servants*, and so are the prophets ; and St. Paul says of our Lord, " He took upon him the form of a servant."* Kings, too, are sometimes termed God's servants, as in the instance, *David my servant* : and, indeed, any believer may, according to the Scripture, receive this title. It is not, therefore, absolutely necessary here, that Isaiah receive this title ; but should the context require it, he may. Let us, therefore, now examine the context.

" Behold," it is said, " my servant shall deal prudently (al. *be fortunate*), he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." We may now, for the sake of argument, suppose this to refer to Isaiah : and let it be asked, At what period it happened that he was so fortunate, exalted, &c. ? This will perhaps be best answered by proceeding with Dr. Gesenius's comment. We are told, then, that God sends him to suffer, to be despised, a man of sorrows, &c. ; to suffer for the sins of the people, and that he shall escape these sufferings by death (martyrdom). Then, in liii. 11, 12, he shall, nevertheless, as a reward enjoy long life ; he shall see his late posterity protracted ; shall see his doctrine spread, and so on. That is, as a reward, his sufferings shall be protracted ; he shall, during this lengthened period, continue to suffer for the sins of the people, and shall also see his doctrines spread, &c. &c. ; and all this mixture of acute suffering and consummate joy, shall at last be evaded by suffering martyrdom ! I have, I think, given nothing here in any way exaggerated beyond Dr. Gesenius's own representations ; and yet the statement appears to be marvellously inconsistent. But let us go on. " Who hath believed our report ? " &c. Here, according to our comment, the prophet speaks in his own person, and in v. 2—9, in that of the people. The first of these statements is in some degree objectionable. The prophet, no doubt, speaks in his own person ; but then he also appears to identify his mission with those of his predecessors ; for he says : " Who hath

* Phil. ii. 7.

believed *our* report?" *i. e.* the report of the prophets generally: and all the law and the prophets bore testimony to Christ; they spake of his sufferings, and of the glory which should follow. In the next place, no ingenuity of man can force the subsequent matter into the mouth of the prophet, as spoken by him for the people: the words are: "For HE shall grow up before HIM as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when WE shall see HIM, there is no beauty that WE should desire HIM. . . . 3 . . . and WE hid as it were OUR faces from HIM; HE was despised, and WE esteemed HIM not. 4. Surely HE hath borne OUR griefs, and carried OUR sorrows: yet WE did esteem HIM stricken . . . 5. But HE was wounded for OUR transgressions, he was BRUISED for OUR iniquities: the chastisement of OUR peace was upon HIM; and with HIS stripes WE are healed, &c. . . . 9. And HE made HIS grave," &c. I suppose it will be here allowed that, from the use of the pronoun WE, the person speaking, who is probably the prophet, means to intimate a plurality of persons, of which he is one: so far, indeed, he speaks in the persons of the people. The next question is: If the prophet is here thus engaged, who can possibly be meant by the pronoun HE, HIM, occurring also in this context? Is it probable, that Isaiah sustains both these persons? Is he, to use the words of the poet, "*acting moonshine and wall too?*" I must be excused for putting so ridiculous a question; but the ridiculous character of our comment must supply the apology. I will only affirm, that if our prophet is here speaking in the character of both these pronouns, *i. e.* in the first person plural, nominative case, and in the third singular, objective, &c. at the same moment, we have an instance of composition which will admit of no parallel in any book ever written, nor in any language ever yet spoken, if we except this one chapter. Again, I should like to know, how this servant of God, who had not the power of predicting any thing, according to our critic, could know that he was to become a martyr for the sins of the Jews, and that he should make his grave with the wicked? This difficulty has not been solved by our commentator, although he has written enough, and more than enough, on this chapter. But, if Isaiah knew all this, so as to be able to foretell it, then must he have been a

prophet indeed! And, in this case, why may he not have made such a prediction respecting any other person? Another question is: How could this prophet suffer for the sins of the Jews? or, What argument can be offered to shew, that God (not merely a murderous people) laid these sins upon him? Again: Who can tell when or how Isaiah divided the spoil with the strong? (v. 12), the fact being, according to the preceding comment, that his sufferings, contemptuous treatment, &c., continued to the very period of his martyrdom. There is still another difficulty. I want to know, how this prophet could say of himself, already arrived at manhood, that he should *grow up* as a root out of a dry ground? The comment tells us (p. 176), that he here speaks in a sort of communicative manner, as at v. 9, reckoning himself among the people, &c. This verse, therefore, must relate to the people, of which the prophet is one. I now ask: Who then can be meant by the *WE* following? Is it the same person or persons marked also by the word *HIM*, occurring also twice in this verse? Dr. Gesenius tells us, however, that the transitions from one person to another are very frequent and bold in this prophet, as just cited; but then, we do not find them changing in the very same sentence. In the example, "Was it not Jehovah against whom *WE* have sinned, on whose way *THEY* would not walk," &c., we have no such transition, or rather confusion, as this. When the prophet says, "*WE* have sinned," he modestly includes himself, just as on another occasion he exclaimed, that he was "a man of unclean lips;" but when he says, "*THEY* would not walk," &c., he very properly excludes himself: for although he might have allowed that he was a sinner, he might, nevertheless, very justly have denied that he was unwilling to walk in the ways of Jehovah. This instance, therefore, is altogether unlike that mentioned in our comment; it is consistent, and contains a construction not unusual even with profane writers; while the other exhibits not a change, but a confusion of persons, and is, as already stated, an instance unparalleled in the whole extent of composition sacred and profane. Another passage is likewise pointed out by Dr. Gesenius, viz. Is. lix. 9—13. But here we have nothing more than the prophet, as above, reckoning himself among a sinful and afflicted people; no confusion nor even change of the

pronouns is here to be found, but all is orderly, easy, and natural. We have verse 21 of this chapter also adduced; but here, as before, we have no parallel to that in question. "As for me," it is said, "this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth," &c. The leading words here, "As for me," must, I think, be necessarily referred to the following, "saith the Lord," *i. e.* As for me, saith the Lord. The prophet here speaks, therefore, as God's messenger. In the next place, the terms *thee* and *thy mouth*, cannot be referred to the prophet; because of his seed we never hear any thing in either the Old, or the New Testament. Neither can be meant the seed of the Jews generally; for we know, that although they had no visible idolatry among them after the captivity, they were nevertheless, in spirit, no better than the heathen generally. The truth seems to be, this prediction must be referred to the Redeemer, mentioned in the verse preceding; and, when this is done, all becomes easy, natural, and orderly: for, believers are, in the Bible, termed God's children; they are counted for a generation: and this distinction, we are also told, shall last for ever.

Neither the latter part of the 52d chapter, therefore, nor the particulars enounced in the 53d, nor yet those pointed out in this last passage, can possibly be applied to the prophet Isaiah, unless we choose to force upon the prophet constructions the most monstrous possible. Dr. Gesenius likewise argues, that they cannot be applied to Christ in any case. Let us now see what reasons he has to offer for this opinion. The first objection is: The state of scriptural interpretation, during the times of the New Testament, was not such as to supply the exact sense of the ancient prophets; and besides, the passage, Matt. viii. 17, is cited in a sense contradictory to the supposition, that Christ can here be meant (Zweyter Theil, p. 163). I answer: Here is much more asserted than can be proved. To deny the first assertion will be refutation sufficient; because whatever is gratuitously asserted may be as gratuitously denied. The second will admit of discussion: and here I think I can shew, that it is Dr. Gesenius who is wrong, and not the Evangelist. The place in the prophet is chap. liii. 4, which stands thus in the original: אָכֵן חָלִינִי הוּא נָשָׂא וּמִכְאֲבֵינִי סָבָלָם, and which I

thus translate: *Surely our sicknesses he hath borne away*, (or prophetically, *he surely shall*, &c.), and *our afflictions he hath carried them off*, (or *surely shall carry*.) That the verb נָשָׂא will bear this sense may be seen in 1 Kings, xv. 22; Dan. i. 16; Ezek. xxix. 19, &c. The verb קָבַל will also bear the same sense,—see Is. xlv. 4, where it is in connection with נָשָׂא and מָלַט.* “*Griefs and sorrows*,” as given in our authorised version for חָלִי and מַכָּאב, are by no means correct, as any one may see by consulting the dictionaries. Now I will affirm, that the Evangelist has cited this passage in its true and proper sense, and that here, as before, the translators and commentators have failed in interpreting him. The place is Matt. viii. 17: Αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβε, καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐξέλασται. *He hath borne away our infirmities* (sicknesses), and *hath carried off the diseases*. The verb λαμβάνω will bear this sense, see Matt. v. 40, and the parallel passage, Luke, vi. 29, where we have αἶψεν: also Matt. xv. 26; 2 Cor. xi. 20; Apoc. iii. 11. vi. 4. For a similar signification of βαστάζω, see Schleusner, *sub voce*. This passage, therefore, does not allude to the sufferings of our Lord, but to the relief he should afford to his afflicted people; and in this sense has the Evangelist cited it. In other and adjoining passages, his sufferings are indeed pointedly alluded to, as every one will see; but this is not done in these words. The text of the Old Testament seems, therefore, to have been full as well understood in St. Matthew's times as in those of our very learned critic; and, if I am not greatly deceived, much better than either he or any of his brethren have yet understood it.

The second class of objections goes to shew, (p. 163), that how great soever we suppose the resemblance to be, between the circumstances of the pious sufferer, mentioned in this chapter, and those of Christ; we, nevertheless, do

* In like manner the Arabic verb رَفَعَ may signify, *extulit, elevavit, sustulit, or abstulit*, as the context may require; as *ib.* 12, وهو رفع خطايا كثيرين, and he bore away the sins of many; where we have in the Heb. נָשָׂא. The phraseology is, therefore, in this place, perfectly similar to that in Lev. xvi. 22, where we are told that the “goat shall bear upon him” (עָלָיו) . . . נָשָׂא, where the same verb is used,) *all their iniquities*,” &c. The Arabic verb حَمَلَ, also in Is. liii. 4, is often employed in the same sense.

find those to be numerous which will not apply to Christ. In chap. lii. 15, for example, it is said, that kings shall personally honour him; so in chap. xlix. 7. In chap. liii. 8, he is spoken of in the plural number, (for לְמוֹ is never used in the singular). Again, at ver. 9, he is to be buried with the *wicked*, (*i. e.* Jesus is to be placed in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea). At ver. 11, he is to divide the spoil with the strong, which implies *worldly triumph*. Let us now endeavour to satisfy these objections.

In the first place, it is not said, in chap. lii. 15, that kings shall *personally* honour him, in a sense which implies his *personal presence*; the passage only affirms, that kings shall shut their mouths, or be astonished, at him, when they shall see that which had not been told them, and shall consider what they had not heard before; *i. e.* as I understand it: when they shall see circumstances brought about, and shall contemplate effects, unknown to them before, but which owe their existence to his instrumentality. But how can this apply to the pseudo-Isaiah? The Jews had no earthly king after the captivity; he could, therefore, receive no personal honour from any such person among them: but if we apply the supposition to any foreign sovereign, its incongruity becomes still more apparent. The application of it to Christ, however, is easy and complete. His fame reached the household of the Cæsars, and that too, perhaps, of every potentate on earth, even in the apostolic times: it brought to their consideration things to which they had before been entire strangers; and these things they were compelled to consider. But, as this subject is again taken up in the commentary, and also dwelt upon at a still greater length by Rosenmüller in his Scholia, let us see how the matter is dealt with in those places.

Here, then, Dr. Gesenius tells us, that if the prophet had intended to write, *he shall sprinkle many nations*, the Hebrew ought to have been, יִנְהַ דְּמוֹ עַל גּוֹיִם רַבִּים, not יִנְהַ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים; and Mr. Rosenmüller, that this verb, whenever it means sprinkling, is not put absolutely, but is followed by the name of the material with which such sacred rite is to be performed, as in Num. xix. 21, *water*; Lev. viii. 11, *oil*; ib. xvi. 14, *blood*. And then it is added, that if the blood of the Messiah had been meant, the word *blood* would have been

expressed, &c. I answer: All this would be very decisive, were it true; but, alas! it is not. Mr. Rosenmüller has, indeed, given us one passage in which the *material*, with which the sprinkling is to take place, is mentioned; but in the other two, it must be supplied by the ellipsis. So in the following: Exod. xxix. 21, וְהִנֵּיתָ עַל־אַהֲרֹן . . . and *thou shalt sprinkle upon Aaron*. Both *blood* and *oil*, however, are mentioned just before, and I suppose one of these at least, the *blood* most likely, is to be supplied. So Lev. iv. 17, אֶת פְּנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת . . . וְהִנֵּה, and *he shall sprinkle the face (front) of the vail*; and *ib.* viii. 30, וַיִּנֵּי עַל־אַהֲרֹן, and *he sprinkled upon Aaron*; so also, *ib.* xiv. 7. In ver. 16, 27, however, we have the material, but no objective case to the verb, which consequently becomes intransitive, and therefore *absolute*, as in the instances above. *Ib.* ver. 51, we have no material, as also in chap. xvi. 14; and in the following member, it (וְהִנֵּה) is again without an objective case. In ver. 15, the construction is with אֶת, as in Lev. iv. 17, וְהִנֵּה אֹתוֹ, and *he shall sprinkle it*; but not with a preposition, as Mr. Rosenmüller will have it. Again, Num. xix. 19, we have this verb without any *material* in immediate connection; while in verse 21, we have מַי, *water*, following it. The fact is, therefore, that this verb, when used to signify *sprinkling* as a sacred rite, occurs both with and without the material attached to it, with which the rite is to be performed; and the assertion of Mr. Rosenmüller is not true.

Let us now come to Dr. Gesenius's version of this passage. He is of opinion, then, that וְהִנֵּה דָמֹו עַל, *he shall sprinkle his blood upon*, &c., ought to have been the construction, if the prophet had intended the blood of the Messiah to be meant. I answer: It does not appear necessary that the name of the *material*, &c., should always follow, particularly when the ellipsis may be easily supplied, which can be done in this place. For example, we have at ver. 14, the sufferings of the Messiah strongly marked out: at ver. 10 of the next chapter (liii.) his person is to be made an *offering* or *sacrifice* for sin. This, therefore, will explain the sufferings thus alluded to; and, when the notion of a sacrifice has once been introduced, nothing can be more natural than to suppose, that the word here to be supplied is *blood*. We will now suppose, there-

fore, that the expression דָּמוֹ, *his blood*, may be omitted, as in the instances adduced above. In the next place, the objective case may be marked after this verb by the particle אֶת, as in Lev. iv. 6, 17, just noticed (for it is not necessary, as asserted by Mr. Rosenmüller, p. 336 of his Scholia, that some preposition, such as עַל, or אֶל, must always follow). We may now have, therefore, יִגְדָּה אֶת גּוֹיִם רַבִּים; and, as the particle אֶת is not necessary here for the purpose of determining the objective case to the verb,* we shall have יִגְדָּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים, the very words used by the prophet!

In the next place, both Dr. Gesenius and Mr. Rosenmüller have recourse to the Arabic root نَزَا *naza*, for the primitive signification of the Hebrew verb, as suggested by Schröder. And, as this verb signifies to *leap*, to *leap out*, &c., the next attempt is, to make out the passage in the prophet with this signification; and this they seem to do to their entire satisfaction. "So we render it," says Rosenmüller: "Sic faciet exilire populos multos, i. e. commovebit eorum animos, excitabit apud eos lætam sui admirationem," &c. Dr. Gesenius adopts the same reasoning, adding, however, the conjecture of Schelling, that the word עָלָיו, which follows, ought to be added to the first member, thus כִּן יִגְדָּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים עָלָיו, *so shall many nations exult at him*. My answer is: I see no necessity whatever for recurring to the Arabic; the verb occurs so frequently, and so obviously in the sense of sprinkling, that he who wishes for another signification cannot but have some hypothesis to serve; and this is the fact here. If, however, we must go to the Arabic, why may we not take this Arabic root نَزَا in the sense which seems most nearly to concur with that of the Hebrew one? Golius, with the author of the Kamoos, &c., makes it equivalent to نَزَفَ *nazifa*, *effluxit sanguis*, et sanguine manavit *vulnus*, &c., which, in the causative or hiphil form, will signify to *emit*, *send out*, blood, &c.; and this is the form in which the word occurs in the places just adduced. This, too, will account for the frequent use of the preposition מִן applied to the material: as Lev. iv. 6, וַיִּהְיֶה מִן־הַדָּם, and he *sent*

* See my Hebrew Grammar, p. 332, &c., and the note. Noldii Concord. Part. p. 125. notes, and p. 133, with the Annotationes et Vindiciæ (ed. 1734).

forth (or sprinkled) OF the blood, &c.; not הִזָּה דָּמוֹ, as Dr. Gesenius erroneously gives: the word signifying the material never occurring as a simple objective case, although אִתּוֹ, expressive of the object, does. In a similar manner is the verb נָתַן construed with מִן, Lev. iv. 7. מִן הַדָּם . . . נָתַן, shall give . . . out of the blood; while in the very verse preceding, as we have seen, we have הִזָּה מִן־הַדָּם, he sent out, or emitted out of the blood. If, however, we take the verb *exilire*, to leap out, in a causative sense, we shall come to just the same result; he caused to leap, or fly out, of the blood. But how this can signify *to exult*, I know not; particularly when we have not the least possible reason for believing, notwithstanding all our two learned critics have here said, that the verb in this form ever takes this sense either in the Hebrew or the Arabic.

Suppose, in the last place, we allow that *many nations shall exult at, or over him*, is the real sense of this passage; What now, it may be asked, will the friends of rationalism gain? Can it be shewn, that nations have ever yet exulted at, or on account of, the pseudo-Isaiah? What has he done for them? Just as much as the other prophets have; and, therefore, they must necessarily exult over them all: but why this pseudo-prophet should be preferred, no one can, perhaps, tell. The passage, may, however, even in this sense be applied to the Messiah; and it can be applied to no other: and so, after all, this mighty parade of erudition has been entirely thrown away!

It is said, in the next place, that we have a parallel to this passage, on the German view of it, in chap. xlix. 7, where it is said: "*Thus saith the Lord, . . . to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord,*" &c. Dr. Gesenius seems to take the phraseology, in the early part of this verse thus: *The Lord saith to him whom man despiseth, &c.* In my opinion, however, this is incorrect, although many authorities may be cited against me, and among these our authorised version. For, in the first place, it is by no means necessary to translate the particle ל in לְבִזּוֹת and לְמַתְעֵב by *to*: on the contrary, this translation does violence to the context. There is a construction in the Hebrew, called by grammarians,

the nominative absolute (see my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 293—295, &c.), which is in some instances preceded by a particle; and, among the particles so used, ל is often found; as in Ps. xvi. 3. לְקֹדְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ, AS TO the saints who are in the land, the whole of my delight is in THEM. This example, too, to which some others may be added, has been cited in illustration of this construction by Dr. Gesenius himself (*Lehregebäude*, p. 725). Let us now turn to the place pointed out in Isaiah. פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה . . . לְבוֹהֵינָם לְמַתְעֵב גֹּי לְעֶבֶד מַשְׁלִים מְלָכִים וְיָרָאוּ וְקָמוּ שָׂרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְמַעַן יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בָּאֱמֻנו קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְרָךְ : Thus hath Jehovah said . . . AS TO (OR, AS IT RESPECTS) the despised of person, AS TO the abhorred of a nation, AS TO the servant of rulers, “Kings shall see, and princes shall rise up and shall worship,” because of Jehovah who is true, the Holy One of Israel, for He chooseth thee. Here, as in the passage above cited from Ps. xvi. the whole ends with a pronoun, referring back to the person contained in the nominative absolute: which, on any other view, is scarcely intelligible. Dr. Gesenius, however, has here unnecessarily introduced a relative pronoun, (*der dich erkohr*) WHO * chooseth thee; which has tended to keep the true construction of the text out of sight. The author of the Syriac version has manifestly taken the passage as an instance of this construction, which he thus renders: סַחְנָא אַחְזָ עֻכְרָ . . . דְּבִגְעַלְלָמָּ נֶחֱמָס : דְּבִגְעַלְלָמָּ חֶפְצָא תְּסִיאָרְ וְנִפְסֵעַ עֲדָרְ כֶּחָ צֻלָּ : סַעְרָ דְּחִבְרָא בְּמַלְמְלֵתָּ : מַלְכָּא זְסִירָ וְנִפְסֵעַ עֲדָרְ מַלְמְלֵתָּ תִּשְׁבְּרָ, כֵּס מַלְכוּ עֻכְרָ בְּעִטְמֵסֵס מְבִימָא : Thus saith the Lord . . . AS TO him whose person is despised, AS TO the abhorred by the people, and by the servants of potentates, kings shall see and shall rise up, and potentates shall worship HIM, because of the Lord

* Rosenmüller tells us, that ך is not only converse in this place, but also has the sense of the relative **אֲשֶׁר**, as it has frequently elsewhere. Truly this is a marvellous little particle! (See my remarks on it in the Classical Journal, No. 80). So, when a commentator happens to misunderstand a passage, he fabricates a rule upon the occasion, and this will enable him to misunderstand a great many more; a charming specimen of modern science, truly! For a similar instance with a nominative absolute, see Ezek. xxiii. 43, &c. **וְאָמַר לְבֵלְתָּ**.

who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen thee. The word אֱלֹהִים introduced after וְיֵשׁוּעַ, determines, beyond all doubt, that the preceding *lomads* (לְ) mark the nominative absolute; although the translator differs in this pronoun from the original. In the last member, however, he changes the person, and ends with the pronoun of the second, just as the Hebrew does. That Gabriel Sionita did not understand this passage, may be collected from his Latin translation of it, which is quite unintelligible. This place is remarkable enough, indeed, for the introduction of Jehovah's words among those of the prophet, "Kings shall see . . . and shall worship;" which, however, is no more strange or unusual, than a citation made by any author and introduced among his own sentiments. In the next verse, this person is given for a *covenant* of the people; and must, consequently, relate to the Messiah; no other person having ever been so situated. The passage, therefore, is parallel with those already noticed; but not in the sense intended by Dr. Gesenius, which rests solely on a false view of it.

Our next business is with chap. liii. 8, in which we have לְמוֹ, to be understood only, as it is said, in the *plural number*, which makes it impossible that the passage can allude to Christ. The sentence is מִכְשַׁע עַמִּי נָנַע לְמוֹ, thus rendered in our version: *for the transgression of my people was he stricken*; or, as in the margin, "*was the stroke upon him.*" I remark: It is not quite so certain as Dr. Gesenius presumes, that this word (לְמוֹ) can be understood only in the plural number. Let the reader examine Isa. xlv. 15; Ps. xi. 7; xxviii. 8; and lxxiii. 10, with the remarks of Noldius (Concord. Partic. p. 438, with the *Annotationes et Vindiciæ*), and then let him say, whether it is not much easier for our German friends to make such assertions, than to afford proof that they are true. For my own part, I believe the assertion to be incapable of proof; and, as Dr. Gesenius has not given one, I suspect he had some forebodings of this. The Syriac version has certainly taken it in the singular, (אֵלָיו, to him), which is no mean authority. Rosenmüller, however, tells us, that wherever this word occurs, it is always equivalent to לָהֶם, to them: that it is put, indeed, for the most part after a singular noun, which is then to be taken collectively and

signifying many. I answer: This may be authority, but certainly it is not proof; and as such, deserves no further animadversion.

Let us now consider Dr. Gesenius and Mr. Rosenmüller's view of this place. Suppose, then, we allow that לְמִי is to be taken as referring to a plurality in its antecedent; how will the case now stand? The version will be, *On account of the transgression of my people, is (or, shall be) their stroke, or affliction.* The preceding context gives the number in every case singular; but here we have the plural; and, in this last portion, we have a complete proposition. I ask: Is it necessary to suppose, that all these singulars with this one plural construction, must be taken as signifying one and the same thing? I believe it is not. Each part may now stand alone thus: "*He was taken from prison for he has been cut off from the land of the living.—On account of the transgression of my* people shall be THEIR stroke.*" That is, Because they have dared to act thus unjustly and cruelly against their best friend and Saviour, they shall be severely chastised. If it be said, that this will present an instance of very sudden transition, I answer: The passage is not more remarkable in this respect, than others already adduced. The truth is, we have nothing more than a reason (and a very obvious one too) rendered, why the Jews should, in the latter times, suffer the heavy wrath of Jehovah. In the same manner is there a reason rendered in the latter part of ver. 7, chap. xlix. already cited; although the subject matter of it differs widely from that given in this. And, my conclusion is, that although I see no strong reason for departing from the usual acceptation of this passage, yet my conviction is, that if any other be proposed, this is the only one that can be admitted, if we would preserve the grammatical construction of the text inviolate. And this will leave the general application of the chapter just as it found it.

We have now to consider the verse (liii. 9), usually translated, "*and he made his grave with the wicked,*" &c. which is here said to be inapplicable to our Lord. This, as

* The change in the person speaking here, seems to me to justify the idea, that this part contains an entirely distinct proposition. Martini and Hensler have also taken the passage in this way. Ges. Com. p. 184.

it is usually rendered, certainly presents very considerable obscurity: hence it has supplied the commentators with almost endless matter for conjecture, and to this day, perhaps, has not been properly made out. The Hebrew stands thus: **נִתַּן אֶת־רָשָׁעִים קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בְּמוֹתָיו* עַל לֹא־חָמָס עָשָׂה** וְלֹא מָרְמָה בִּפְּיוֹ, which I would translate: *And he permitted his grave (or sepulture to be) with the wicked ones: nay, with a man rich in his death: because he did no violence, nor uttered guile with his mouth.* The verb **נָתַן**, to give, place, is often used in the sense of *permitting*, or the like, see Gen. xxxi. 7; Exod. iii. 19, &c. I choose this sense, because the last part of the verse requires it: “*because he had done no violence,*” &c. His obscure and disgraceful sepulture, was not in consequence of any evil done by him; and, as he was a person of great distinction, and could have obtained help of God against his enemies, had he sought it (for his Father could have given more than twelve legions of angels), he *permitted* this to take place, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.† I supply the verb **הָיָה**, to be, which is very frequently omitted by the ellipsis.

In the next place, I take the ו *vau* in **וְאֶת** to be equivalent to *nay, moreover*, or the like. See Noldius, pp. 285, 288. In the first member, he allowed the Jews or Romans

* Many attempts have been made to render a reason for the plural form of this word. I may be excused if I here offer mine. I can affirm, I think, that whoever is meant here, his death is looked upon as an important occurrence: this is evident from the context. In such cases, words are sometimes put in the plural number, in order to heighten the expression, as **חֻכְמוֹת** in Prov. i. 20. ix. 1. where it seems to be put to signify the *greatest, or divine, wisdom*. So here, perhaps, his *important, momentous, precious*, &c. death, is intended to be conveyed.—The passage may also be translated a little differently by taking **בְּמוֹתָיו** to signify, *at the time* of his death, &c. thus: *At the time of his death, he shall permit his grave, or burial, to be with the wicked ones, nay, rather with a rich man; because he did no violence*, &c. Instances of this kind of transposition are often to be met with in the Hebrew Bible, (see my Hebrew Grammar, pp. 372—3.) and, if this is one, **בְּמוֹתָיו** is perhaps placed here, in order to correspond with **קִבְרוֹ** in the parallelism, *e. g.* He permits with the wicked his *grave or sepulture* (to be), nay, with a rich man *in his dyings*, i. e. *at the time or circumstance of his momentous death*. Both, however, give the same sense in the main, and can be applied to none but Christ. The latter will apply to Joseph of Arimathea as being a *rich man, generally*: the former, in a more spiritual sense.

† Matt. xxvi. 53, 4; Phil. ii. 8.

generally to dispose of his body; then it is added, by way of restriction, * but rather his grave was with a man rich in, or through, his death: by which, I suppose, Joseph of Arimathea is meant; a man who seems to have been truly sensible of the riches thus to be acquired. In this view of the context, which is certainly consistent with its grammatical construction, the *wicked* mentioned in the first member, are not identical with the *rich* in the second. And, if so, we have no difficulty whatever in applying this passage to our Lord. In the last part, I supply the verb עָשָׂה (reading מְרַמֶּה, *did guile*), from the former member הָקָם עָשָׂה. In Ps. lii. 4, we have the construction, עָשָׂה רְמִיָּה, *acting perfidiously*, which will, perhaps, justify the phraseology. For the sake of brevity, I do not think it necessary to notice either Dr. Gesenius's translation or his commentary. I will only remark, that Jarchi has taken the first part of the verse just as I have.

The last objection I shall notice is: That as he was to divide the spoil with the strong (liii. 12), which implies *worldly triumph*, this prediction cannot apply to Jesus.† My answer is: To assume this, will involve a *petitio principii*. According to the phraseology of both Testaments, *triumph* may be either *temporal* or *spiritual*. To speak of *triumph* as temporal, is undoubtedly to use the word in its primitive and natural sense; to speak of *triumph* as spiritual, to use it in a translated or metaphorical one. But then, it should be remembered, we have no other words to which we can have recourse in such cases; because we know of no *spiritual* or abstract *language*. Our first ideas are necessarily natural ones, and to these, names must be given which have been taken from nature. Our spiritual or abstract notions, we gain by information and reflection; and the names we give to these, not being derived from an abstract language, must necessarily be borrowed from nature. Hence we have *a kingdom of priests*, Exod. xix. 6; *a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9; *the kingdom of heaven*; *conquerors through Christ*, &c. to which innumerable similar instances may be added. The remainder of Dr. Gesenius's objections I shall pass

* See my Heb. Gram. p. 291, &c.

† See an admirable exposition of this whole chapter in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius, lib. iii. § 2; and another in Justin Martyr's *Apology*, pp. 97, 8. edit. 1700.

over, because, I believe, it will be trespassing too much on the patience of the reader, formally to discuss them. Besides, my object is, not so much to refute all I may meet with, as to offer a few specimens of the critical principles and practices of the German school of this day: and, in this respect, I have, perhaps, given quite enough from Dr. Gesenius to shew, that his notions on the last six and twenty chapters of Isaiah, and on the fifty-third in particular, are grounded in mistake and error.—Let us now return to the Christologia of Mr. Bertholdt.

Our first notice here will be on the expressions *ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ*, occurring in John, i. 50. compared with *ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων*, in Matt. xxvii. 37, &c. These titles, however, or their equivalents, are not confined to Jewish writings published for the first time after the captivity, as Mr. Bertholdt will have it; on the contrary, the kingly power of our Lord is clearly pointed out in the second Psalm, ver. 6. and this, we have every reason to believe, is as old as the times of David, (see Acts, iv. 25—7. So also Ps. xlv. 1; Isa. ix. 6, 7. xxxii. 1; Hos. iii. 5, &c.) There is nothing, therefore, in this title which savours of modern Judaism.

We are next referred to Ilgen on the Notion of the Title of *Son of God*, ascribed to the Messiah in the Sacred Books. To this book I have not access; nor is it of any consequence; because nothing can be more certain, than that the expression is easily deducible from the second Psalm, “*Kiss the Son,*” &c. Isaiah, ix. 6. “*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . and his name shall be called . . . Mighty God . . . Prince of peace.*” I am aware that some objections have been offered against the translation of *אל גבור* by “*mighty God*,” but when I find this phrase used in chap. x. 21, certainly in this sense, I am compelled to believe that this is a just translation. We have nothing new, therefore, in this title; and certainly nothing to fix its origin to some period after the captivity. Mr. Bertholdt, however, directs us to look for this title in 4 Esdr. ii. 43, 47. xiii. 37, 52. and also in the cabbalistic book, entitled Zohar on Isaiah xix. where we have the passage, “*Kiss the Son,*” cited from the second Psalm. I shall say nothing about the apocryphal Esdras; it is enough for me to remark, that the author of the Zohar goes for this title to the second Psalm, which is

much older than the apocryphal Esdras, or the Zohar itself. It is rather amusing here to remark, that our learned critic should prefer the comment to the text, in his endeavour to ascertain the "origin of this" title. This is truly a very scientific proceeding !

In the next place, the title of *first-begotten* is marked out as having originated in the *Tikkune Zohar* (a comment on the preceding), or in another work entitled *Veelléh Schemoth*. The latter of these, however, cites the title from Ps. lxxxix. 27, "*I will make him my firstborn,*" &c. We are here, however, (p. 33), referred to § 24, where another origin for this title is promised. But when we come to this section, reference is made to § 23; and, as this section contains a developement of the whole system upon which Mr. Bertholdt's work is constructed, we shall now examine it. This section is intended to account for the title, *the word of God*: a subject, it must be confessed, of no ordinary difficulty. Mr. Bertholdt chooses the following method: The Jews in the later times, says he, began gradually to acquire more philosophical and exalted notions than formerly. Among the Orientals, a philosophy had long prevailed which considered every thing as *an emanation* from the Deity. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, continues he, that this view of things easily recommended itself to the Jews, a people governed solely by sense. Hence they began to distinguish between the *intellectual* and *material* world; and hence many became implicated in a sort of dualism. Having arrived, however, at the emanation system, the various intellectual agents supposed to exist, received the titles of *αιωνες*, *δυναμεις*, &c. all of which, however, were again to flow into the ocean of divinity from which they had been derived. In the next place, the great Supreme, having remained in a state of rest and thought for an indefinite period, at last applied himself to external operations. He then received the title of *νους*, *the mind*, *σοφια*, *wisdom* (*חכמה*), or *ὁ λογος*, *the word* (*דבר, מִימְרָא, רִבּוּר*) of *God*, (because a word naturally follows thought). This, he goes on to say, may be shewn to be the case, from the apocryphal books of the Old Testament and the Targumists (all in use about the times of Jesus), from the writings of Philo and the Apocalypse of John, which is, moreover, deeply tinged with this doctrine.

So the ancient *Midrashes*, the *Zohar*, &c. We then have an account of the Cabbalism of the Jews; and the conclusion is, that hence we see how all things, which are done by God are said to be done by (*δία*) him (*Jesus*).

As this view is important to modern Rationalism, I may be excused, if I examine it with some attention. In the first place, then, Mr. Bertholdt's sketch of the philosophy of the ancient Orientals is not quite correct. They did not hold, nor do they now, where this philosophy prevails in the East, that God, when applying himself for the first time to action, was termed *vous*, *mind*, &c. They held that, upon this occasion, he really produced an intelligent agent, and to this they gave these titles, and even that of the *Son of God*. (See Dan. iii. 25.) This Being, according to the Brahmins of India, is *Brahma*—according to the Buddhists, *Adi Buddha*.* Nor is he more felicitous in his reason ascribed for the title *word*. In the Scriptures, indeed, this is the sense of the *λόγος* of St. John, and of the *מִימְרָא*, *דְּבָר*, &c. of the Jews;† but it is far from certain, that this is the sense taken by the Platonists. They, like the Chaldeans, Persians, Hindus, &c. considered this first emanation as being the *first Intelligence* or Officer of the invisible all-pervading fountain of Deity; *ὁ λόγος*, therefore, was not with them *the Word*, but *the Intelligence*. In the ancient Scriptures, we have the term *Word* mentioned merely with reference to the revelation made from God by the means of his Angel, Christ. In the ancient philosophy, this first emanation is a metaphysical *being*, an *ideal existence*; taken originally, indeed, from the prior revelation, but prostituted to the purposes of a wretched philosophy. In the Old Testament we have no mention whatever of an emanation, nor of any thing like it. In the Oriental philosophy, we recognise the facts found in the Old Testament, and some of the doctrines; the unity of the Deity, and the history of the creation, for example, all reduced to this metaphysical system. But it is not true, that the word *σοφία*, *wisdom*, (*חֵכֶמָה*) originated either with

* Mr. Bertholdt adduces a passage from Justin Martyr in illustration of his hypothesis; but it is notorious that Justin, a most valuable writer in many respects, was one of those who has been termed *Platonizing Fathers*. See Bruckeri Hist. Phil. vol. iii. p. 370, &c.

† See pp. 106, 7 of this work.

the Orientals or with the modern Jews ; the truth is, we have it in Prov. viii. 1—31, used by Solomon, and there said to have accompanied the Almighty, even before the works of his creation. Now, I ask : Does it not become extremely probable, that all these heathen notions about *Wisdom*, the *Word*, the *Firstborn*, &c. must have originally been taken from the Revelation ? Is there any thing so ancient to be found in all the remaining lore of Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, Greece, Rome, India, &c. as this one chapter of the book of Proverbs ? I doubt it : besides, these very philosophers themselves allow, as far as we possess their opinions or their writings, that all their facts were borrowed from others. That this philosophy was cultivated to a considerable extent among the Jews in the times of our Lord, may be readily believed ; and that certain traces of it are to be found in the New Testament is, I think, unquestionable. Simon Magus, for instance, is termed by the Samaritans, ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ μεγάλη, by which they must have meant, that he was the first created *Intelligence*. But I deny, that any such doctrine is there to be found as taught either by our Lord or his Apostles, and, that Mr. Bertholdt can produce any such passage from the Apocalypse of St. John. It seems, however, that both our Lord and his followers opposed the false philosophy of the Jews of their days, in the strongest and most direct terms. Our Lord accuses them of following the traditions of men, and of being ignorant of the true sense of their Scriptures. St. Paul expressly warns the new converts against *science falsely so called*, (τῆς ψευδωνόμου γνώσεως, where some have reasonably enough supposed, that the word γνώσις used, alluded to gnosticism) and lest any man spoil them through philosophy, traditions, the rudiments of the world, &c. (1 Tim. vi. 20 ; Col. ii. 8.). Nothing, therefore, can be more adverse to the views of Mr. Bertholdt and his brethren, than the facts of the case are, when truly stated ; and the truth is, that if Christianity is any where found to agree with the theories of heathenism, gnosticism, cabbalism, &c. it is only in the school of Mr. Bertholdt and his colleagues.

Come we now to § 24. Here we are told, that every doubt, which can be entertained on the subject, viz. whether the Jews of our Lord's times held these notions or not, will

vanish upon citing St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 4, 9, &c.), and who calls the Messiah the *wisdom* (σοφίαν) and *word* of God (λόγον Θεοῦ). To this may be added the fact, continues he, that the Apostles generally, when speaking of the divinity of our Lord, use expressions which strongly savour of the λογολογια of the Jews; such, for example, as Jesus being sent down from heaven *and made flesh* (σὰρκωθέντα); his having *the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (το πληρωμα της θεωτητος);—*the image of God* (την εικονα του Θεου), &c. Col. i. 15. Apoc. i. 18; ii. 8; xxii. 13; iii. 7, 14; xix. 11. John, i. 1, 14, 18. Phil. ii. 6. Apoc. v. 12, 14, &c. We are likewise told, that the Targumists speaking of the Messiah often use the terms מִימַר דִּי, *the word of God*. My reply is: 'No objection can be made to this statement of facts: a very strong one, however, may to the use here made of them. It has already been stated and shewn, that the ancient Hebrews, when speaking of the Messiah, used terms equivalent to these, without at all entertaining the philosophical notions of the cabbalistic Jews, the Platonists, the Gnostics, &c. We now affirm that, for the same reasons, it is not at all necessary to suppose, that, when the Apostles made use of these expressions, they intended to inculcate this philosophy; particularly when we know, that St. Paul actually warned the Churches against it. It is not meant to be argued, that this theory may not be applied here, or that all the passages may not be attempted to be accounted for on the emanation system; but it is, that this system is to be found taught any where in the Bible, or that the orthodox Jews ever held it. That the first schismatics attempted to solve every difficulty in religion by means of this system, I consider as quite certain;* and, hence it is that we are to account for similar expressions found among the philosophers, and even among the heathen of the present day. But, we are not to look to philosophy, which is modern in comparison of the Revelation, for the origin of what we there find traced out by the hand of authority alone. It is the practice of the sacred writers, as already remarked, to state their facts and doctrines without assigning any reason, solution, or cause

* See my Observations on the Origin of Heathenism, &c. printed in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature.

whatsoever; and, in this way are they recommended to the faith of believers. Were it otherwise, our system would be merely philosophical, and as such might be matter for curious inquiry, but not for the exercise of faith. If, however, we attempt to account for these things, I believe the emanation system is the only one to which we can have recourse. This seems to have struck Mr. Bertholdt very forcibly. I am of opinion, that it occurred to the ancient philosophers long before it did either to the cabbalistic Jews, the Gnostics, or to our Author; and, it is curious enough to remark, that several of the ancient fathers, as well as some modern writers, have had recourse to it, for the purpose of explaining the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Whether this system be true or false, I know not: I deem it impious to offer any speculations on the subject. One thing I may perhaps affirm, viz. that if it be true, no possible doubt can for a moment be entertained, that the passages above cited will admit of no interpretation, except that which teaches a true and particular divinity in the person of our Lord. Whatever view, therefore, we take of this subject, his divinity is unquestionable: *i. e.* supposing the Revelation to have been specially given by God, whether we take the emanation system to explain it, or receive its declarations as purely authoritative.

The next particular noticed is, our Lord's being said to *have the key of the house of David*: and Luke, xviii. 38, 39. Apoc. iii. 7, are cited to shew where this subject occurs. It occurs, however, for the first time in Isaiah, xxii. 22, where the context speaks of Eliakim; and, as he seems there to be the representative of the house of David, the passage may well have been applied to our Lord in the Revelations; because He is the true representative of that house, and the person to whom the office of opening and shutting could be exclusively ascribed.

For the term *Saviour* (σωτηρ, ישוע, or מושע), we are next referred to the Apocryphal 4 Esdras, ii. 36, and Luke xxiv. 21. The term, however, occurs again and again in the Old Testament, and is applied either to temporal deliverers, or to God himself, as in Judg. iii. 9. 2 Sam. xxii. 3. 2 Kings, xiii. 5. Isaiah, xix. 20; xliii. 3. Ps. cvi. 21, &c. It is true the word ישוע does not occur; nor is it necessary it

should, as it is nothing more than the Greek *Ἰησοῦς* put into Hebrew letters, but to which מוֹשֶׁה is a perfect parallel in signification. We need not, therefore, look for the origin of this title in books published since the captivity.

The next title is, *the prophet* (ὁ προφητης); and, for the origin of this, we are directed to look into the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, published by Fabricius; Luke, vii. 19, and John, vi. 14. If, however, we turn to Deut. xviii. 15, we shall find a promise there made, that God would raise up a *prophet* like unto Moses, &c.; and in Acts, iii. 22, 23, this is referred to Christ by St. Peter. There is nothing new, therefore, in this title. I must now be excused from following this matter any farther; because I believe it to be unworthy of further refutation, and likely to be as tedious to the reader as it certainly is to myself. I shall now, therefore, take leave of Mr. Bertholdt's *Christologia Judæorum*, believing I have done quite enough to expose the fallacy of the principles on which it is constructed, as well as the inaccuracy and partiality with which its particulars are detailed. That such a system should ever have gained ground among men who profess to be philosophers, and in possession of modern discoveries in the arts, science, history, criticism, &c. and who, moreover, possess a considerable share of philological learning, is, with me, scarcely less than miraculous. I am apprehensive that the old cause, viz. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of God*," &c. has much more to do with all this, than our German divines are aware of; and, that professing *to be wise*, they have unwarily become foolish. I am sorry to be compelled to utter such opinions as these; but the nature of the case supplies me with no others. Could I, indeed, find science properly applied to the interpretation of the Bible, solid and profound philology, sober investigation, and just decision, whatever may have been the results arrived at, I should have considered myself bound to revere the intention, to admire the patience, and to applaud the erudition advanced. Here, however, I find no such thing. On the contrary, we have only an hypothesis which has again and again been refuted,—philology too feeble and hollow to bear the slightest touch; and conclusions drawn, which must provoke the smiles of the merest tyro. That all which is to be found in this school is equally inconclusive,

groundless, or rash, I do not mean to affirm; but I will affirm, that whenever *this subject* is touched upon, all sobriety, judgment, common candour, and common sense, seem instantly to take flight. In the course of my reading on this question, I am free to confess, I have never found any thing better than the examples above adduced:—which, I must now add, have not been selected as the worst; but only because they were the productions of eminent men, and therefore such as merited the most candid and painful consideration.

DISSERTATION II.

PART I.

SECTION I.

ON PROPHECY AND ITS INTERPRETATION.

PROPHECY, as found in the Scriptures, is of two kinds—*general* and *particular*. *General* prophecy is that which proceeds, on certain given principles or data, to instruct, encourage, deter, or to threaten, those for whom it has been given. In one case it informs us, that *God is the author and maker of all things*; in another, *that those who fear the Lord shall want no manner of good thing*; and, in another, *that evil men live not out half their days*; and so on. Those who make these declarations, in the first instance, must of necessity be inspired teachers; in the second, they may be either inspired or uninspired; and, in either case, they are termed prophets, particularly in the New Testament. *Particular* prophecy is that which foretells such particular events as could not be foreknown by the exertion of any human faculties or powers whatever; and it is afforded for the purpose of giving effect to some religious or moral truth. Those who lay claim to the office of a prophet, in this sense, must necessarily be vested with supernatural powers, or be favoured with superhuman assistance. And, when there is good reason for believing that this has taken place, such declarations are binding upon all, to whose knowledge they have come.

Again, prophecy, either general or particular, may be enounced in three different ways,—by words, or by signs, or by both taken together.* The import of the first must be made out by a diligent attention to the context, to the grammar, the

* A further distinction may be made between *symbolical* and *metaphorical* language; the one exhibiting by *action* only the thing to be taught; the other, though describing by words the thing to be taught, yet expressing by these more or less of the imagery used in the symbolical. The distinction is important; but it will not be necessary for our present purposes.

rhetoric, and the antiquities of the Hebrews; that of the other two, by attending to these, with the circumstances detailed, the explanations occasionally given (for in many cases these intimations are explained by the prophets themselves), and to the fulfilment of such predictions, as given either in the Old or the New Testament.* When this is done, we shall never fail, perhaps, in ascertaining the *intention* of the prophets; though we may not always succeed in understanding minutely every one of the symbolical figures. This, however, will be of but little importance: the general scope is sufficient for edification; and when we shall have arrived at this, the main object of the prophet will have been ascertained. All prophecy must necessarily be definite in the terms of its enunciations. General prophecy must be given in language easy to be understood by those to whom it is sent; and, as the numbers here are large, and contain the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, it must involve no declarations unintelligible to the mass, nor rest on grounds, the goodness of which they cannot see or appreciate. Particular prophecy must, in addition to these considerations, be definite and single in its objects. That is, the person or thing foretold must be clearly marked out and defined, to such a degree at least, as to leave no reasonable

* Parables, which involve a species of teaching common to the prophets, employ neither sign nor symbol, but state cases which they proceed to consider as facts; and then, in conformity with the declarations of the moral law, as principles, deduce their conclusions. They belong, therefore, to what we have termed *general prophecy*. There are instances, however, occurring, even in particular prophecy, in which cases are put as facts; and these apparently for the purpose of prefiguring some future event. In these instances, the particulars so laid down may be considered as symbolical. See Ezek. iv. 4, &c. Hosea, i. 2. In the first of these cases, it is, according to Jerome, impossible the facts alluded to could have taken place: in the last it is extremely improbable; yet both evidently contain particular predictions. See also Matt. xxi. 33—46; xxii. 1—14. The cases put, therefore, must be considered as symbolical. In every case, the interpreter ought to transport himself as much as possible into the times in which such declarations are made; which, in conjunction with the aids to be derived from other parts of Scripture, and of the New Testament in particular, will never fail to afford him all the light he can want. People generally read the Bible just as they do a newspaper, and as if all had taken place only yesterday, destitute of all acquaintance with oriental idiom, usage, and antiquities; and hence have arisen the never-ending varieties found among us.

doubt on the minds of those who read it, either that it has been fulfilled, or that it has not : while it must also provide against imposture ; that is,—that the person or thing so predicted cannot be assumed or so fabricated, either before or after the time in which it ought to come to pass, as to be the cause of great and extensive error. This, I say, is what prophecy in every case ought to be, in order to deserve that name ; and this, I will affirm, is what that is which is found in our Scriptures. It is not meant, however, to be affirmed, that it is such as cannot possibly be misunderstood : this would be to affirm, either that the learning or intellectual powers of every reader were perfect, or that the language of the Bible is unlike that found in nature, incapable of being misunderstood or misapplied, which would be absurd ; but only, that upon due care being taken, and every rational means employed necessary for the purpose of understanding the context, the communications thus made are capable of being duly understood and applied, as far as it is necessary they should be.

Let us now exemplify this part of our subject ; and first, that which relates to prediction by words only. In Genesis, chap. iii. 15, we have this remarkable prophecy “It (rather He) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” As this passage now stands, we have evidently a prediction made that a person to be born of the woman, should effect something tending to recover what had been lost by the subtilty of the tempter. This, I think, is undeniable ; otherwise we shall be at a loss to discover why the words are given at all. In the next place, there is a peculiarity in the mention of seed, a word commonly used to signify *posterity* ; for we have not only זרעָה, *her seed*, but this is followed by הָיָא, *he*, restricting the term to the singular number, and not by הֵם, *they*, which must have been the term used had *posterity* generally been meant. The prediction, therefore, has, first, this peculiarity in it, that the seed is said to be that of the *woman*, a circumstance never found in the Hebrew writings on any other occasion ; for there the genealogy beginning with a woman is believed to stand for nothing.* In

* We have, indeed, in the historical books, such instances as “his mother’s name was” so and so ; and “the sons of Zeruiah,” who was a woman : but we have no instance in which any family, tribe, &c. is traced

the second place, the use of the pronoun הוּא, *he*, restricts this posterity to one person only, who is moreover described as one who should obtain some singular advantage over the tempter. By these qualifying terms the prediction is made sufficiently definite; and, as these are such as to imply nothing short of miracle in their fulfilment, there was no possible danger of their being counterfeited by impostors. Some of the terms of this prediction, however, have been inadequately rendered; for "*it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*," fall very far short of the terms of the original, both in definiteness and force. The words are הוּא : וְשֹׁפֵף רֹאשׁ וְאַחַר הַשּׁוֹפֵף עֶקֶב, which I would translate, *He shall bruise (or rather break) thee capitally, though thou bruise (or break) him partially*. עֶקֶב, I know, signifies *the heel*; but as this is opposed here to the head implying the seat of life or the entire person, the heel, when so opposed, must have been intended to signify only a part, and that perhaps the least important in the human body. This sense is generally extracted from the authorised version; but, as the version is itself defective, I have thought proper thus to notice it. There is still another circumstance worthy of remark. The position of the words רֹאשׁ, *head*, and עֶקֶב, *heel*, plainly shews that they should be construed as adverbs, and not as nouns;* which, I think, gives emphasis to the whole, and intimates that in the one instance victory is to be complete, in the other only partial: and if this appears upon the face of the text itself, it is surely more authoritative than when found in a commentary.

We may now remark, that we find, in this prediction what ought to be found in every other, in order to entitle it to the name of prophecy, *particularity* of circumstance, such as could neither be foreseen by human prudence, nor counterfeited by human endeavour. Besides, the whole is such as could have left no doubt on the mind of every reasonable person, before it was fulfilled, that it had not yet come to pass; and, after the event had taken place, that its fulfilment was now no longer to be expected.

Let us, in the second place, take a few instances of

up to a woman as its founder; nor any promise made, if we except this case, in which a woman is to give birth to any remarkable person, family, or nation.

* See my Hebrew Lectures, art. 234. and 251.

the prediction made by signs. In Ezekiel, chap. xii. 3, 4, &c., we have a remarkable example of this sort. "Therefore," it is said, "thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house. Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing; and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity. Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground; for *I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.*"

From the general tenor of Ezekiel's prophecies to the Jews in Babylon, there could remain no doubt on the mind of any considerate person, as to what he intended by this proceeding. The symbols were sufficiently intelligible, and, there can be no doubt, they were generally well understood. But, that no difficulty may possibly remain on this subject, and that others who did not witness this symbolical exhibition might also understand it; and further, that posterity may not be in the dark as to its intention, the following explanation is given. *Ib.* v. 8, &c.: "And in the morning came the word of the Lord unto me, saying, Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou? Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them. Say I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; *they shall remove and go into captivity.* And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes."

Here, then, we have the symbolical exhibition, with its interpretation; and in all such cases, it will not only be absurd to doubt what the intention of the prophet was, but a high degree of impiety to put any other construction upon his words. There are cases, however, and those not a few, in which the symbols are given without any accompanying interpretation; and the question will now be: What are we to

do in these? My answer is: We must carefully consider the general character of these symbols in connection with the context, and interpret accordingly.* If such symbols happen to be elsewhere explained, then we must try those explanations; and if they are found to suit our context, which I believe they generally will, our work will be done; for we shall then have Scripture interpreted by itself. But if they are no where explained, all we can do will be, to take an extensive view of the context, and of similar symbols, and then to propose our interpretation, as that which *seems* to be the most suitable to our prophet.

But, that we may the better understand the general character of these symbolical exhibitions, it will be worth while to consider a few further instances of their occurrence; and this we shall now do, not more for the purpose of insisting on what we ought to understand by them, than of inculcating what we are *not* to understand by them; or, in other words, to shew where our explanation of them ought to end: for here, as in almost every thing else, it is an important part of wisdom to know where we ought to stop.

If then symbolical exhibition (or language) is intended to supersede that given by words in their usual significations, it will be but reasonable to assume, that the one kind of instruction will, in most respects, be analogous with that of the other; *i. e.* the one will instruct us in words or sentences respecting *some one definite person or thing*, and no more, in each parcel of its context: the other will, in like manner, have *some one object*, and no more, in each parcel of its exhibition, to teach and to enforce. For example: If in one case we are told that "God created the heaven and the earth," the truth intended to be taught is, that God, and no other being, is the creator of all things. So, in Ezekiel's vision above cited, the carrying away captive to Babylon is the principal subject inculcated; and, that this may be

* The principal errors, which have injured and harassed the Church of Christ, appear to me to have arisen either from taking the declarations of Scripture *too figuratively* on the one hand, or *too literally* on the other. Some of the early orthodox Christians were exceedingly unhappy in the first, the heterodox or heretical in the second; in which both indeed followed the unbelieving Jews. The same causes still operate in a very great degree, and very much to the injury of Christianity.

the more deeply impressed upon the minds of the Jews, some particulars, such as digging through the wall, carrying out the stuff at twilight, covering the face, &c. are added. These particulars, then, are not given, in order to detract from the interest of the main object, but, on the contrary, to add to it ; and to shew, that as the prophet marked out the very particulars, the exhibition itself must have come from God, who alone could thus point out and define the exact circumstances of this event. In this case, therefore, we have particulars perfectly of a piece with those pointed out in the first prophecy given to Eve, which it has been said are necessary to every thing claiming the character of particular prophecy. It is of the greatest importance to bear this in mind, for the following reasons : 1. If prophecy was really ever given, either in words or symbols, there must have been an intention on the part of him who gave it, that it should be understood ; and for this end, there must have been unity of design. For, if not, and if the same thing had been intended to teach more than one main truth, it might be asked : How could it have been possible to exhibit to men, such as they are, either words or symbols, sufficiently explicit to unfold this double, triple, &c. object to their understandings ? And would not the very attempt itself have so encumbered either the main or the secondary objects, either the context or the symbols, as to have left them unintelligible in any and every point of view ? If, for example, in Zedekiah's horns of iron* we are to understand, not only their strength, which is no doubt intimated by the iron, and hence a certainty of the victory so promised, but also the nature of the iron, whether it be cast iron or steel, and the like, and also their shape, the mode of their fixture to the head, &c. ; then, I say, there will be no unity of design in the subject, and, that by dwelling on these inferior particulars, we shall diminish or destroy the effect evidently intended by the whole ; and finally perhaps, lose entire sight of the intention of the prophet. We do not object, let it be remembered, to these inferior considerations wholly, but only to their being raised to a place in these questions, which neither the nature of the case, nor the apparent intention of the prophet will allow. In the great image of Daniel, for example, no objection can be

* 1 Kings, xxii. 11.

made to the consideration of the toes being partly of iron and partly of clay; for this was evidently intended to shew, that a mixture of weakness and strength should exist in the thing predicted: but we contend, that this was the main and the principal thing inculcated, and not that these toes should be counted and farther dissected, so as to intimate a definite number of other particulars.* So likewise, in the sacrament of our Lord, which is purely symbolical: "*This do in remembrance of me,*" is the main object of the teacher; for by this, the origin of the institution is evidently pointed out: "*This is my body,*" and "*this is my blood,*" are added to give a sanctity to the foregoing words, and strongly to impress upon the mind of the hearers, that as often as they did this, *they shewed forth the Lord's death*; the bread being the symbol of his flesh, and the wine of his blood. When they are commanded to eat of this, a mystical union with Christ, and with one another, is manifestly intended to be taught. See John, vi. 56. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 15; xii. 27. Eph. v. 30.† For here we have no intimation whatever either of power or of miracle; the disciples were simply enjoined to continue to repeat this rite by way of remembrance, not of Christ's victory, but of his sufferings; not of his glorified, but of his humiliated state; for here he humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, and condescended to be made a curse for us. And if we have no miracle, then no miraculous conversion of the elements could have taken place; nor, by parity of reasoning, can they on any other similar occasion: the persons present, moreover, seem to have had no idea whatever of such conversion; nor has St. Paul, in mentioning this rite, ever intimated any thing of the kind, which he surely would have done, had a miracle always taken place upon the occa-

* Dan. ii. 41, 42. Some of the fathers, however, as Irenæus contra Hæreses, lib. iv. cap. 26. Theodoret. Com. in Dan. cap. 7, go farther (edit. 1642. p. 630.); although on chap. ii., where the passage occurs, the latter ventures not beyond Daniel's own interpretation, which is quite sufficient.

† See an admirable exposition of this rite in Justin Martyr's first Apology for the Christians, Grabe's edit. Oxford, 1700. p. 125, &c., with his valuable notes. Justin here represents this rite as *mystically, not really*, uniting the body of Christ with that of his disciples, the church; which is no doubt its true object and end.

sion. The rite is, therefore, purely symbolical ; and, in taking the bread and wine, we take it as representing the body and blood of Christ, and strictly in commemoration of his dying for us.

In the next place, any declaration, as already observed, whether made by words or signs, must be *definite*, at least to a certain extent, otherwise it would be unintelligible ; or, if not unintelligible, would carry with it, either what is common with imposture, and therefore be likely to encourage others to attempt an imitation, or would lose every mark of being a revelation from One who is both *wise* and good. The character of imposture has ever been, to be dark, mysterious, double-tongued. Such were the celebrated oracles of old. They spoke, but they spoke not to be understood until the event should be fulfilled ; and then, which way soever things went, the prediction was found sufficiently pliant to conform with them. — It is indeed grievous to hear persons among ourselves often talking about unfulfilled prophecy, as if this was the case with the sacred writers ; when, in fact, a want of knowledge must lie at the bottom of all such notions. They have perhaps, through haste, or a reverence for the memory of good men, been themselves led into error on some fundamental points of scriptural interpretation, and, in order to suppress all inquiry into subjects, in which they think they see no certainty, they have recourse to what is in itself not only erroneous, but highly mischievous and degrading to the word of God. Another evil resulting from this indefinite view of prophecy is, It opens the flood-gates to every species of fraud and mysticism. What ill-informed but *prudent* men will not do, *equally ill-informed*, but *imprudent* men will do with all their hearts. Here, what prudence will not dare to meddle with, *imprudence* will make it a merit to carry to the most ridiculous extremes ; and, not to follow this will be triumphantly stigmatised as a want of *light, faith, piety, knowledge*, and a thousand other such things ; and even the Scriptures themselves will be cited to keep up the delusion : “ He taketh the wise in their own conceits, and he confoundeth the counsel of the prudent,” &c. &c. ; all of which will be loudly re-echoed from every quarter, by the undiscerning but well-meaning multitude.

The very nature of the case, therefore, demands that prophecy, whether verbal or symbolical, be simple, intelligible, and a legitimate object of Christian inquiry. If, indeed, neither the one nor the other has yet generally been made out, the fault lies not in the thing itself, but in the persons. And, the fact of the case is in strict conformity with this statement; for, before the times of the Reformation, sufficient learning and patience had never been brought to bear upon the question; and, since that period, although great learning and labour have occasionally been directed to the investigation of the text of Scripture, yet this has never been continued for any considerable time; nor has there ever been encouragement sufficient held out, to afford the prospect of it.—But to leave this subject.

Let us now consider a few of those instances of symbolical representation, of whose main object there can be no doubt, but of the inferior parts of which no explanation has been given: and then from these endeavour to extract some rules for our guidance in instances which may seem to be still more obscure. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy it is said: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also *the Lord* sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain did he fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the *Lord of Hosts*; the whole earth is filled with *his* glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." Here, I think, we can have no doubt that these subordinate circumstances are intended merely to increase the majesty, splendour, and awe, of the main object; namely, the person of the Almighty; and this for the purpose of giving authority and effect to the mission, subsequently mentioned; and, if this be the case, it will be extremely absurd to offer any speculations either upon the abstract nature of God or of these ministering and subordinate Beings.* The same holds good in predictions which

* Some most valuable remarks on this subject will be found in the Commentary of Theodoret on the first chapter of Ezekiel. A few extracts

are purely verbal. We look in these, first for the main object foretold; secondly, for those particulars which are to define it: and we may, if we choose, also inquire into its object and end. This will be all legitimate; but no one would here think of offering any theological speculations upon the different parts of speech composing such declaration. This would be madness; nor would he, if he were in his right mind, think of counting the words, the powers of the different letters or syllables composing them: this would be to follow the jargon of the Cabbala, and to infer, that God himself would condescend to instruct and to inform his creatures by means the most ridiculous and childish possible. Besides, the sacred writers appear to have been of all men the most direct and simple. Their practice was to appeal to nature and to experience, which all who have had the good fortune to have lived a few years in the world, and the prudence to use their eyes and understanding, know to be plain, direct, and unembarrassed.

The main object had in view, therefore, in the prophecy just cited seems to be, the majesty and authority of the Lord of Hosts. Let us now turn to the commencement of Ezekiel's prophecy, and endeavour to ascertain what we meet with there. In the first place we are told, "that the heavens were opened," and that the prophet "*saw the visions of God.*" At the end of this chapter, we are also told that "*this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord;*" and that when the prophet saw it, "*he fell upon his face.*" In the commencement of the second chapter, God speaks and thus commissions the prophet to

I cannot forbear making, which I hope will have the effect, both of setting this matter in its just point of view, and also of sending others to this excellent work on the Interpretation of Prophecy. In some instances, I think, this elegant writer over-presses his symbolical matter; and in others, forgets the glories and privileges of the true Church: but although he may have occasionally been mistaken, his work cannot be read without very great advantage and delight. The following are the passages I would cite as important in this place: Οὐ . . . ἀπλῶς ἔφη τέσσαρα τεθιῶσθαι ζῶα, οὔτε μὴν ὁμοίωμα ζώων ἀλλ' ὡς ὁμοίωμα τεσσάρων ζώων. ὡς εἶναι δῆλον, ὅτι οὐκ αὐτὰς ἐθεώρουν ΤΩΝ 'ΑΟΡΑΤΩΝ ΤΑΣ ΦΥΣΕΙΣ οἱ Θεσπίσιοι προφῆται, ἀλλ' εἰκόσµατά τινα, κ. τ. λ. (tom. ii. p. 309). Again (p. 313), Πανταχοῦ ὁ Θεὸς προφήτης τὸ ὁμοίωμα τίθησι, διδάσκων ἡµᾶς σκιαγραφίαν τινὰ τῶν Θεῶν τεθιῶσθαι, καὶ ΟΥΚ ΑΥΤΗΝ ΤΩΝ 'ΑΟΡΑΤΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΦΥΣΙΝ. See also pp. 314, 315.

go and to preach to the house of Israel. The *main object*, as well as the *end* had in view, is therefore evidently the same with that of Isaiah. And it is most probable, that the appearances of the living creatures, &c. which I should term the subordinate circumstances of this revelation, were added solely for the purpose of giving majesty, awe, and consequently effect, to the whole. They appear to suggest nothing more than the instruments of power, with which God is invested, and here to have been opened out to us, in the only way likely to strike our senses, and to insure our deepest attention and reverence. Not, I believe, for the purpose of putting us in possession of any knowledge respecting the hierarchy of heaven; but only to impress us with the feelings of awe and reverence, and to assure us that it was the God of nature who spoke. Nor have we here any thing more than we have in the verbal declarations of the Scriptures; for in those we are told, that he makes *his angels spirits*, and *his ministers flames of fire*: alluding, I suppose, to the storms, tempests, thunders, and lightnings, with which he has occasionally executed his purposes. The exhibition of Ezekiel differs, it is true, in some respects from that of Isaiah; but, from the partial resemblances discoverable in the subordinate agents, as well as from the main object and end being perfectly similar, we cannot doubt, I think, that both are of one and the same sort of symbolical representations. But why, it may be asked, are these subordinate parts so much dwelt upon, in either case, if they are intended only to contribute in this way to the effect of the primary object? Why, for example, does the tempest come from the north? I answer: It was most likely to intimate, that the calamity predicted, was to come upon Judea from that quarter, as many have already supposed, and if so, an invasion from Babylon was probably intended; which, I think, an examination of the context will confirm. The circumstance of the lion, ox, eagle, and man, being found among the representations, may have been given for the reason which had caused Zedekiah's horns to be made of iron, merely to give strength and effect; and to imply that, as the God of nature would be engaged in this, a combination of the principal animals with the lightning, &c.

would most properly and compendiously exhibit the aggregate of his all-overwhelming power.

Let us now turn to the Book of the Revelation, and examine one or two of the symbolical representations there given. In chap. i. 10, &c. it is said: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest write in a book," &c. Ver. 12. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, *I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen,*" &c.

Here we may remark: The person of Christ, to whom the title of *the first and the last*,* as well as divine worship, is given, occupies in this vision the place which Jehovah does in that of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and for the very same end; namely, that of commissioning his servant to make a communication to his people. So far the vision is of the same character; but, inasmuch as the Churches to whom this communication is to be made, are also introduced under the symbols of *candlesticks*, and their Presidents or Bishops under those of *seven stars*, this vision may be said to be of a more complex nature, and to include, not only the majestic and authoritative character of the person sending, but also that of the persons by whom the mission is to be undertaken. It is highly worthy of remark too, that Christ

* See Isaiah, xlvi. 12, where this title is ascribed to Jehovah.

not only holds in this vision the place which Jehovah does in those already noticed, but he also speaks throughout this and the two following chapters in his own person, "*I know my works.*".... "*For my name sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee;*".... "*or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick,*" (chap. ii.) "*These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*" (ver. 18). "*I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to his works*" (ver. 23). "*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations*" (ver. 26). "*These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars*" (chap. iii. 1). "*I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels*" (ver. 5). "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent*" (ver. 19). This, I say, is remarkable, and what the Scriptures never ascribe to any created being. Here, then, we have the person of Christ represented as vested with all power and all authority, and giving his commands as God over all, blessed for evermore. The vision, therefore, is, in these respects, perfectly similar to the two last; and of the same character is the next, beginning with the fourth chapter.

Here, as in Ezekiel, we see "*the heavens opened,*" but have a variety in this respect, that a voice like the sound of a trumpet addresses the Evangelist, whereas in Ezekiel, the noise of the wings is said to be like that of great waters, "*as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host.*" We then have a description of the throne, coinciding in most respects with that given in Ezekiel (chap. i. 26), but which seems to have been taken from the book of Exodus (chap. xxiv. 10). Round about this throne we have four and twenty other but inferior thrones, upon which are seated as many elders clothed in white raiment, and with crowns on their heads. The *white raiment* represents, as we are taught, *the righteousness of saints*; and by crowns, we are elsewhere taught, *victory* is symbolised.

These then must be *religious*, and not *natural*, *agents*: and, I should suppose, from their number, that they represent the heads of the Church under both dispensations, *i. e.* the heads of the tribes of Israel and the Apostles united. In the fifth verse we have the thunderings, lightnings, &c. of Ezekiel, with the addition of the seven spirits of God before the throne. In the next verse, we have the sea or laver, made first for the use of the tabernacle, and afterwards for the temple (Exod. xxxviii. 8; 1 Kings, vii. 23); and then we have Ezekiel's living creatures described, in the mouths of which the doxology made by the seraphs of Isaiah is put, and they are said to rest neither day nor night, but to cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Upon this, we are informed that the elders cast down their crowns, fall prostrate and worship, joining in a similar ascription of praise. Here, then, as before, we have the majesty of all heaven and earth conspiring to give solemnity to the enunciation of what is contained in this remarkable and highly interesting book.

The scheme, developement, and end, had in view, appears here to be quite of a piece with those of the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel; the only difference is, the introduction of the elders, which is done, perhaps, for the purpose of uniting the Old Testament with the New, and of ascribing to the person of Christ what the Prophets did to the majesty of Jehovah; with the additional circumstance, in the first chapter (of the Revelations), of the symbols of the seven Churches and Bishops, and, in the second, of the seven lamps representing the spirits of God, which last, however, seems to be taken from the seven-branched golden candlestick described in the prophecy of Zechariah, (chap. iv. 2, 11, 12).

We have yet got no farther than the machinery introduced apparently for the purpose of giving solemnity and authority to what is to follow; and, that we may, in some measure, put what has been advanced to the test, let us try how these views will answer in other places where similar exhibitions are given. For this purpose, we shall now examine a few of the representations of Zechariah, who has in no way been sparing of this symbolical mode of prophecy.

In the first chapter, and at v. 8, we are told, that a man was seen riding on a red horse, and that behind him there were

other horses, red, speckled, and white. In reply to the question (v. 9), "*What are these?*" we are told, (v. 10), that "*these are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.*" We may conclude, therefore, that, whatever else they may be, they are here put for God's ministering servants: the same, perhaps, with the seraphs of Isaiah, the spirits said to be in the wheels of Ezekiel's imagery, and God's seven spirits as mentioned in the Revelations.* The colours of the horses, which seem here to be mentioned with some particularity, are perhaps intended to intimate their *fiery, various, or mortal* qualities. The reply given at v. 11 is, that they had walked to and fro through the earth, and found it to be at rest; which seems further to be established by their being seen among the myrtle trees. In chap. iv. 2, we have a candlestick all of gold, . . . and his seven lamps thereon, &c. To a question put in ver. 5, "*Knowest thou not what these be?*" it is replied in ver. 6, "*This is the word of the Lord unto Jerubabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.*" Now, we are told in the Revelations, that the seven lamps mentioned there mean God's seven spirits, (chap. iv. 5), *i. e.*, as already remarked, God's ministering agents. It is, therefore, not to the might of the Israelites, however it may be assisted by the monarchs of Persia, that the second temple is to be built, but by God's assisting grace and favour. I will not press the subject further, by attempting to account for the candlestick's being of gold; because we have probably arrived at all which the Prophet intended to teach. If we go on to ver. 10, we shall find these seven (*i. e.* the lamps) said to be the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth. This, I think, will confirm our explanation. Again, in chap. vi. we have four chariots which come out from between two mountains. In the first are red horses; in the second black horses; in the third white; and, in the fourth grisled and bay horses. In answer to a question, as to what these are, it is said, "*These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth.*" From what follows, we may be sure that we have here only a

* See the Commentary of Theodoret on this passage of Zechariah; also on ver. 17, 18, and to the end; and on chap. iii. 9. and chap. vi. 1.

different description of the same agents. The red horses are unemployed; the black horses proceed to the north, and, with the white, which go after them, they there execute Jehovah's commands. The grisled proceed to the south, and the bay horses seem to be commissioned to execute general purposes. All of which appears to intimate, that Jehovah's purposes respecting his people are in progress; and, upon this assurance, the rebuilding of the temple is confidently predicted (ver. 9—15), see also Dan. x. 5, 6. In all these cases, then, notwithstanding their variety, we have nothing more than symbolical representations, exhibiting the effective agency of the Almighty, and nothing more.*

Let us now proceed to some of the visions of Daniel, which, I doubt not, we shall find to bear upon the same subject, though considerably varying in particulars. In chap. ii. 32, we have an image, the head of which is of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet are partly iron and partly clay. In the next place, a stone is cut out by some invisible power, and this strikes the image on the feet: the consequence is, the image is totally destroyed, and the stone itself grows into an enormously great mountain.† One would, I think, collect from this, that some power was predicted, which was finally to be overcome by some other; and that these several particulars of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay, were intended, in one way or other, to qualify the relation thus symbolically given. But, beginning at ver. 37, we have the whole explained; and here we learn, that, taking this king and his state for the first, three other states are to follow, the characters of which are aptly enough illustrated by these metals and the clay. The kingdom which is to succeed

* We have an admirable note on this subject in the Commentary of Theodoret on Daniel, chap. vii., a part of which only can be given here. Προσέκει δὲ εἰδέναι, ὅτι ἀσώματος ὢν ὁ Θεὸς, ἀτλοῦς τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος, περιγραφὴν οὐδεμίαν δι' ἡμέρας, ἀλλ' ἀπερίγραφον ἔχων τὴν φύσιν, σχηματίζει πολλάκις πρὸς τὸ χρησιμον, ὡς Ἰβνι, τὰς ὁπτασίας· καὶ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ἑτέρως μὲν αὐτὸν ἐπιφανόμενον τῷ Ἀβραάμ, ἑτέρως δὲ τῷ Μωσῇ, καὶ ἄλλως τῷ Ησαΐᾳ, καὶ τῷ Ιεζεκιήλ δὲ ὁσαύτως, ἑτέραν ὅψιν ἐπιδείξεν· ὅταν τοῖνον τὴν τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων ἰδὴς διαφορὰν, μὴ πολὺ μέρφον ὑπολάβῃς τὸ θεῖον, κ. τ. λ. (Ib. p. 631, 2.)

† Tertullian identifies this prophecy, and very justly as I think, with that in I. arch. chap. ii. 2, 3. Tract. adversus Judæos.

these, is to be set up by the God of heaven, and is never to be destroyed. So far, I think, all is intelligible and clear. In chap. vii. the same circumstances are evidently portrayed in a different vision, with some additional particulars. Here we are told, ver. 1, 2, that the vision was seen by Daniel himself; that, in the first place, he saw four great beasts come up out of the sea, apparently during a storm. The first was like a lion; the second like a bear; the third like a leopard; and the fourth unlike to these, having iron teeth, and being exceedingly fierce: it had, moreover, ten horns, &c. In the next place, these powers (thrones) are cast down, the Almighty sits in judgment: one like the Son of man is invested with universal dominion; and this dominion is never to end. At ver. 17, we are told that these four beasts represent four kings; but (ver. 18) that God's servants shall finally obtain universal rule, and that this rule shall continue for ever. From the general similarity observable between these two visions, I think it is scarcely possible to doubt, that both refer to precisely the same events; and if so, the concluding part of the former is here explained as intimating the erection of a kingdom, which shall have a particular respect to true religion, and which shall never terminate: this is again repeated in ver. 22, 27. So far every thing is plain and easy. The additional particulars found here I pass over, as not necessary to my purpose.

In chap. viii. we have, in all probability, a repetition of the same events, exhibited in a manner still differing a little from the foregoing. The first symbol witnessed is a ram with two horns, which, at ver. 20, is made to signify the kings of Media and Persia. The second (ver. 5) is a he-goat, which came from the west; and this, at ver. 21, is said to be the king of Grecia. This king became exceedingly powerful, (ver. 8); but his power (horn) was broken: and out of it arose four others, to be situated in the east, west, north, and south, perhaps of his empire. Out of these came a fourth power (or horn), which also became exceedingly successful, making war on the saints, and even destroying the sanctuary. At ver. 22, the four horns just mentioned are said to represent four kingdoms, arising out of that of Grecia. Then, at ver. 23, "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance,

and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty (through God's permission); and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy *the mighty and the holy people*;—but he shall be broken without hand." That the latter part of this vision is identical with that of the preceding ones, is, I think, without doubt, for these reasons. First, this fourth empire is in all of them described as being exceedingly powerful, fierce, and successful. In the next place, it is to make war upon the saints (chap. vii. 21—25, and ver. 27, the saints are to prevail); and chap. ii. 34—45, this power is to be destroyed by a stone cut out without hands.

Again, we are told that this fierce king is to prevail at a time when "*transgressors are come to the full*;" which, if I am not greatly mistaken, is had in view by our Lord himself when he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem: "*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*" Matt. xxiv. 12, &c. And by St. Paul, when he says, (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, &c.) "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,*" &c., which, he goes on to say, at ver. 9, shall be fully exposed. In the last place, its being said that he shall destroy *the mighty and holy people* seems sufficiently to determine the question, that this is to be that same fourth power which, in Dan. vii. 21, was also said, should make war with the saints, *and prevail against them*; but which it is in every case said, shall be finally overcome.*

In chap. xi. this vision is again repeated with further additional circumstances. At ver. 2 we are told, that three kings shall yet reign in Persia, and after these a fourth, who

* So Hippolytus the martyr, who is said by some to have been a disciple of Irenæus, and to have flourished about A. D. 220. "*Aureum caput simulacri, Leæna, Babylonii erant: humeri et brachia argentea, Ursus, Persæ et Medi: venter femurque aneum, Pardus, qui ab Alexandro Græci rerum potiti sunt. Crura ferrea, stupenda Bestia ac terribilis, Romani, qui nunc rerum potiuntur. . . . Cornu aliud parvum succrescens, qui inter illa numeratur, Antichristus. Lapis percutiens conterensque simulacrum, qui terram adimplevit. . . . Christus.*" De Antichristo. Edit. 1716, p. 15. See also his Commentary on Daniel, published in a work entitled, "*Daniel secundum Septuaginta.*" Romæ, 1772," &c.

shall surpass the rest in riches. This man shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. A king shall now arise, who shall have great dominion (*i. e.* a Grecian king); but this power shall be divided towards the four winds (or into four parts, as before). We then have some particulars from ver. 5 to 30, which we shall now pass over. At ver. 30 we are told, that “*the ships of Chittim shall come against HIM (i. e. against the king of the north, Seleucia); and at ver. 31, “Arms shall stand on his part (i. e. who comes from Chittim), and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.” Ver. 36: “And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.”* Here we have the four monarchies as before, each designated much in the same way; and the last, which is the most important, so exactly described as to leave no doubt whatever of its identity with the last empire of the preceding visions. If, however, any doubt could remain on the mind of any as to what this last power is, the declarations of the New Testament must effectually remove it (Matt. xxiv. 15): “*When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth (Daniel), let him understand, i. e. mark what I say), Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.”* Ver. 34: “*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.”* Words, I think, cannot more decidedly fix the sense of this prophecy than these do; and if so, the Roman power is intimated in every case. St. Paul, too, if I am not greatly mistaken, has made an allusion to this prophecy too plain to be misunderstood. From the prophecy of our Lord just cited, no doubt could possibly remain on the minds of the Christians as to his *shortly* coming to avenge himself on his enemies; and, as this was a matter of the greatest interest to them, it is not unlikely that the signs of its approach would be occasionally misunderstood. In order to correct any such error, St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, 2 Ep. chap. ii. v. 1, &c.: “*Now we beseech you, brethren... That ye be not soon*

shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means (or, in the words of our Lord, *'Whoso readeth, let him understand'*): for (that day shall not come) except there come a falling away first (in the words of Daniel, until *'Transgressors are come to the full,'* or, in our Lord's, till *'iniquity abound,'* &c.), and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God;" (or, in Daniel's words, "The king shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation shall be accomplished: for that which is determined shall be done").* The end of which is, that the kingdom shall be given to the saints. So St. Paul, ver. 8: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed (be made manifest, exposed), whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"—*i. e.* The Son of man shall

* That these passages were understood in this sense by the primitive Church, we learn from Irenæus contra Hæreses, lib. iv. cap. xxv.; Theodoret Com. in Daniele, cap. vii.; except that the latter understands the kingdom of the saints to relate to the state of the saints in glory. We often hear cited, in connection with this subject, 1 Tim. iv. 1—3, stating that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c., against which Timothy is exhorted to teach: whence it might be inferred, that these times should soon come on. Now, if we look into the histories of that period, we shall find that such things were actually taught and enforced. The Encratites, for example, taught that "marriage was of the devil; reckoned all married persons as fornicators, &c.; that no person should eat flesh, and that no wine should be drunk." The Apostolicks or Apotacticks held the same as to marriage; and after them, the Origenians; while the Manichees held the two principles, rejected marriage, and the use of flesh-meats and wine.—Jones on the Canon, vol. i. p. 151. I do not think, therefore, that these Scriptures could have been originally directed against the errors of Popery; while there can be no doubt they may be cited in condemnation of them. Many marks of the fondness of celibacy may be found in the apocryphal Scriptures, as in the Acts of Paul and Thecla (Jones on the Canon, vol. ii.), &c. See also Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. cap. xxix.; Irenæus contra Hæres. lib. i. That these doctrines were known during the Apostolic times, Philo and Josephus may be adduced to shew.

be vested with universal dominion, and that dominion shall never end (as noticed above). St. Paul goes on to say, that "*the mystery of iniquity doth already work.*" It has begun, but had not yet arrived at that fulness which was to precede the coming of Christ in power to judgment: the betraying of father and son, of brother and brother to death, had not yet taken place, nor had the abomination of desolation yet been set up; all, however, was in progress. "*Therefore,*" adds he, ver. 15, "*brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions* (i. e. the warnings mentioned at ver. 5,) *which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.*" The man of sin, &c.* mentioned above, has, I know, been often referred to the Papal usurpation. That this usurpation is antichristian, I have no doubt; yet, I think this passage cannot relate to it. The passage in St. Paul (ver. 4) is evidently a parallel to that cited from Daniel, which can by no ingenuity be made to signify the pope, as far as I can see. Besides, it will be extremely difficult to shew, how *popery* could be said to be at work as a mystery in the days of the Apostle. But if this be said to refer only to the principle, I then ask, Why refer this principle to popery, which did not exist till about six hundred years afterwards, when heathenism, and heathenish Judaism, are at hand, to which it will equally well apply? The truth is, some one endued with temporal authority and power, is evidently had in view by Daniel. He is a king who shall prevail against the saints; and if St. Paul has in his mind the same person, which I think is indisputable, the emperor, or the power, of infidel Rome, is obviously the person or thing meant.† I may now, perhaps, conclude, that the principal

* The immediate precursor of Antichrist, according to Lactantius, was Nero: and in this I believe Lactantius was right; and I have no doubt such was the general belief of the Church in his day. According to St. Paul, some one who then let, or stood in the way, was to be removed before the general persecutions commenced; and we know that Nero ruled when Paul wrote this, and that with Domitian the times of trial began. Nero, too, was literally *taken out of the way* in an extraordinary manner; for he disappeared, no one knowing how or why.—See Lactantius *de Mortibus Persecutorum*.

† Some parts of this chapter (2 Thess. ii.) have been thought so particularly to fix themselves upon the pope, as to admit of no other application: e. g. ver. 4, "*So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God:*" which, it is argued, cannot apply to any heathen Roman emperor, because we know of

features of all these four visions of Daniel, were intended to point out precisely the same great and important events; and specifically to foretell the existence, with many particulars, of four great empires; and that the last of these was to be the Roman, it is, I believe, impossible not to see, whether we examine the declarations of the Old or of the New Testament. The particulars I willingly pass over, because they are not so important, nor so easily to be determined, although I have no doubt they all may be made out as clearly and as satisfactorily as the nature of the case requires. It will be said, perhaps, that I ought, in illustration of my principles of interpretation, to have selected passages about which there has been less dispute and mistake. I answer: I know of no passages less liable to be mistaken than these; nor any in which there is so large a number of circumstances tending to suggest their just interpretation. My opinion of

no instance in which one of them *sat in the Church*. My reply is: The authorised version seems to me to give an erroneous view of the Scripture in this passage. In the first place, we have, in ver. 3, ἵνα μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον—i. e., unless THE apostasy come first: where our version gives, “except there come a falling away first;” making the whole quite indefinite; whereas the apostasy had in view by the Apostle is evidently that specific one predicted by our Lord. Again, in ver. 4, we have in the original, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς Θεὸν καθίσαι, “so that he sits as God *to, for, or against*, the temple of God;” not, *in* the temple of God. I know it may be said, that the particle εἰς is sometimes used in the sense of ἐν, *in*, and that the ancient versions have generally so taken it here. I argue, nevertheless, that this is not the natural or usual acceptance of this particle in any case: nor is it obviously so, even in the passages usually adduced in support of the signification *in*; and, what is of the most importance, no such sense is necessary here; on the contrary, the passage is only rendered obscure and perplexing by its application. There are, however, other considerations, and such, I think, as are quite sufficient to determine the intention of the Apostle here, without relying on the signification of particles. In ver. 3, it is said, “Let no man deceive you,” &c. I would only ask: Can any one possibly suppose that this is any thing more than a repetition of the warning given by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 5, 11, &c.? Again: “Except there come a (the) falling away (ἡ ἀποστασία),” &c. Compare Matt. xxiv. 12; Mark, xiii. 12; Luke, xxi. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 3, 6, 11, 13, 14. At ver. 9 we have: “With all power and signs and lying wonders.” Compare Matt. xxiv. 24; Luke, xxi. 22. Again, at ver. 8, “Whom the Lord shall consume,” &c. Compare Dan. vii. 10, 11; Matt. xxiv. 27, 30, 39; Luke, xxi. 26—30. I will only remark in conclusion, that if these particulars are not sufficient to determine the Apostle’s meaning and intention, no argument any one can offer will.

them is, therefore, that they are, of the *particular* prophecies to be found in the Scripture, some of the most definite, and consequently the most easy. That they have been subjects of controversy is to be regretted ; but this is a strong reason why some further effort should be made to ascertain the principles on which they are constructed, in order to their being made out more satisfactorily than perhaps they have hitherto been. From these examples it will probably have appeared, that an extensive comparison of the context, taken in addition to such explanations as the sacred writers themselves may have given, is the method most likely to ascertain the main intention of symbolical prophecy. That we should not be too anxious to make any one symbol (or even word in Hebrew) always to signify precisely the same thing, and then argue that other symbols (or other words) must necessarily signify something else ; and, that we should, in no case, look for more than one well-defined subject in any piece of prophetic teaching, whether that be given in words, or in the equally expressive but less obvious language of symbols, is, I think, equally apparent. From what has been offered, it must also have appeared, that the context in which any symbolical language is found, ought to be very carefully weighed in connexion with its parallel passages, history, &c. And that, when this is done, we shall without doubt arrive at the principal thing intended to be inculcated. Having said thus much on this subject, we may now proceed to other considerations.

SECTION II.

ON THE UNITY OF PROPHECY.

IN our endeavours to understand the prophetic declarations of Scripture, it is my opinion, that our first business should be to make out the great and leading features, such as those noticed above in each case. In coming to our conclusions, we certainly ought to be very much on our guard, not too readily to fall in with any thing specious or new ; to adopt nothing that will not admit of the amplest proof : but then I contend, that every important subject presented in Scripture will admit of this ; and about unimportant ones we need not

trouble ourselves. When we have got thus far, we should be careful, in the next place, to offer no interpretations inconsistent with such obvious and important results; otherwise, we shall make Holy Scripture just as inconstant and variable, as double-tongued and delusive, as were the celebrated oracles, or the still more celebrated philosophers of old, and, instead of rendering it more convincing or instructive, create a prejudice against its reception, such as it may never be in our power to remove.* I will exemplify this part of our subject by a striking but common occurrence. No circumstance, perhaps, is so clearly predicted in the Old Testament as the coming of Christ. It seems to have been the subject of prophecy long before the Jews had been chosen as a people. In that case, no reference could be made to the Theocracy, or system introduced by Moses; and accordingly, in those places we

* We have a remarkable instance of this kind in Mr. Forster's work on Mohametanism, already noticed. The author, in this work, sets out with the promises made to Abraham in favour of Isaac and Ishmael, which are as distinct, definite, and single in object, as words can make them. Isaac's promise expressly holds out the gift of the Holy Land and the additional spiritual blessing of the Messiah's kingdom. Ishmael's contains nothing (expressed) beyond temporal mercies. Out of the promise to Isaac, however, Mr. Forster extracts not only all the milk and honey of Canaan, but all the gall and wormwood of Jewish apostasy;—not only all the blessing of Christianity, which it truly contains, but also all the mummary of popery, the idolatry, traditions, and persecuting spirit of the western Antichrist. From the promise to Ishmael he derives the temporal wealth, the twelve princes, his descendants (Gen. xxv. 16, &c.), the warlike prowess and power of the Arab nation, as enemies to the Jews (which is to a certain extent a good deduction), but also the rise, progress, and permanency of Mohammedanism; and all this, because he finds certain resemblances, which he terms *analogy*, *parallelism*, &c. too close and constant, as he believes, not to have been designed. The principle is, in my opinion, a most fallacious one. Mankind is pretty much alike in all ages. Nations and empires grow up, flourish, and decay, very nearly in the same way; and so do individuals. And the consequence is, there occasionally occur such instances of similarity as amuse and surprise the historian. The truth is, the world is governed by general and constant laws; and under these, similar results will now and then present themselves. Mr. Forster dwells on the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve princes to be derived from Ishmael; but he might also have introduced the twelve Cæsars of Rome, and the twelve Imams of the Shiah Mohammedans; and if he had been disposed to make the inquiry, I have no doubt his industry and ingenuity would have discovered a train of resemblances, just as well connected and as convincing, as those are which he has between the promises and events relating to these two patriarchs.

find none.* After the Theocracy had been introduced, and as long as it should continue, events predicted to take place, provided they did not reach beyond the time to which this system had been limited, must necessarily be such as to fall in with its provisions. Prophecies, therefore, relating to the return from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple, and the like, would invariably be of this character; they would speak of times and of circumstances congenial with the Theocracy: all blessings would be confined to Palestine; and all God's people would inhabit those portions of land which had originally been assigned to one or other of the twelve tribes of Israel. This, I say, must necessarily and obviously be the case, because circumstances will allow of no other. The prophetic declarations, however, and those not a few, do occasionally reach beyond this period, and their particulars beyond these limits. Some of them speak of times when a *new heaven* and a *new earth* shall exist; when old things shall have passed away;† when the Spirit shall have been poured out from on high,‡ ALL shall be taught of the Lord,|| and when his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and his glory to the uttermost parts of the earth.§ Under these circumstances, I say, it will be absurd to limit the declarations of Scripture either to the times, the circumstances, or the country, of the Theocracy;¶ it will be, to confuse that which in Scripture is

* A most admirable work on this subject, and one which cannot be too often read, is the *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius. I will select one or two passages. Lib. i. Ποία δὲ προσδοκία ἦν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἡ τῷ Λεβανίμ ἐπηγγελμένη περὶ τοῦ θεῖν ἐυλογηθῆσεσθαι ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς; πέφνην τοιγαροῦν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Μωσῆς ἀκριβῶς ἐπιστάμενος, τὴν μὲν πρὸς αὐτοῦ διαταγεῖσαν νομοθεσίαν ἔξασθενεῖν, εἰς τὸ πᾶσιν ἐφαρμόσαι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Again, *ib.*, after speaking of the patriarchs, he says: οὐκοῦν διὰ τούτων ἀπάντων τὸν ἀρχαιότατον, τῆς τῶν προπατέρων θεοσεβείαν τρόπον, ὁ Χριστοῦ Λόγος πᾶσι καταγγέλλας τοῖς ἔθνεσι παροφανῶς αποδίδικται, ὡς εἶναι τὴν καινὴν Διαθήκην οὐδ' ἄλλην ἐκείνης τῆς ἀρχαιοτάτης τῶν Μωσαίων χρόνων εὐσεβοῦς πολιτείας. ὡς τε ἡμοῦ καὶ παλαιὰν αὐτὴν εἶναι καὶ νέαν. See also cap. ix. and x. of this book.

† Isaiah, xliii. 18; lxxv. 17; lxxvi. 22. Micah, iv. 1—8.

‡ Is. xxxii. 15. Joel, ii. 28.

|| Isaiah, xl. 5; liv. 13.

§ Malachi, i. 11, &c. Psalm lxxii. 8—11, 17.

¶ So Eusebius, *Demonstrat. Evang.* lib. i. Ρωμαῖοι τὴν πόλιν ἰόντες πολιτορχία καθεύλον τὰ Ἱερουσόλυμα, καὶ τὸν αὐτόθι ναόν. λήλυτό τε αὐτίκα πάντα ἡ Μωσαίως διάταξις, καὶ τὰ τῆς παλαιᾶς περιήρητο Διαθήκης. Some remarkable instances of this kind occur in the prophecy of Daniel. In chap. ii. 44, we are told, that *the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*; and this is

kept clear and distinct ; and to introduce difficulties, doubts, and perplexities, which, under such a view of things, no ingenuity may be able to remove. This, however, has been done again and again by a considerable number of able divines ; and it is still done in this country and others, particularly with regard to the question of the restoration of the Jews. Certain passages are taken from the later prophets, which speak strongly on the subject of the prosperity of Jerusalem, and then it is concluded, that in order to satisfy these, the Jews must again be restored to Palestine. Some have gone so far as to determine the time, and even the manner, in which this is to be done, and then have congratulated themselves with having discovered, for the first time, the exact period of the latter-day glory. It is, however, a very remarkable fact, either that this doctrine never occurred to the writers of the New Testament, or that they forgot to commit it to writing. For it is certain, their constant and obvious declarations were, that Jew and Gentile were now one, and that there was no difference whatever as to privileges, the same Lord being rich to all those who called upon him.* And further, we are expressly told by the Apostle,

to be done during the times of the last kings of the fourth monarchy. In chap. vii. 11, the beast, which evidently symbolises this monarchy, is slain ; the dominion of the rest of the beasts is also taken away ; and at v. 13, 14, the Son of man is vested with this endless and universal dominion. At v. 18, the saints, his servants, are to bear rule, which is repeated at v. 27. Again, chap. ix. 24—27, the period when this shall take place is mentioned. Now, I think, I may lay it down as a rule admitting of no exception, that, supposing we know the limit of this period, and can, in any case, ascertain the limits of any other given prediction, whatever falls within this limit must belong to the Theocracy, whatever falls without it, to the times of the reign of the saints of the Most High ; or, what in other terms is styled the *kingdom of heaven*, and by theologians, the new dispensation.

* Rom. iii. 22. “ *For there is no difference.*” So *ib.* x. 12, “ *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*” Again, chap. iv. 12, we are told, that Abraham is the reputed father of all those who hold his faith ; and v. 16, that the promise is sure to all the seed, both to those who had been under the law, and to those who had not, but had received the faith of Abraham. See also ver. 24, 25. Now, I ask, taking for granted that St. Paul’s reasoning may here be relied upon, if the promise is sure to all the seed, and all believers are reckoned as being the seed of Abraham, then, granting also that a part of this promise was the possession of Canaan, if any restoration to

that the Jew had been broken off from his own stock, that the Gentile had been grafted thereon, and been made the proprietor of his once glorious privileges. Circumcision, too he tells us, availeth nothing, that sacrifice had ceased ; that the tribe of Levi was no longer exclusively the priesthood of God ; and, in short, that all things had become new.* With these things before us, one would scarcely suppose that the Jews would be carried back, under the old system, to Palestine, and there made to possess the land, each tribe in his ancient allotment. Scripture is manifestly against this, unless it involves contradictions. Reason can see no object to be obtained, unless indeed it be supposed that the Theocracy is to be revived ; which will require the rebuilding of the temple, the restoration of circumcision, and indeed of every other particular required by the law of Moses.†

It is argued, however, that there are certain *particular* prophecies which require this interpretation. Let us now see what these are. I must be allowed to pass over many of those occasionally cited from the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, because it would be to offer proof where none can be wanting, that such places relate simply and solely to the return from the Babylonish captivity. The most

this land is ever to take place, must not the seed which is of the faith be that which is to be restored?—that is, must not all believing Christians, not unbelieving Jews, be the persons to whom this land ought to be given up ; for even during the very first times of the Theocracy, Moses distinctly told the Jews, that if they ceased to be faithful, this land should be taken from them. (See Lev. xxvi. 1—39 ; Deut. xxviii. 15—37, 45—47, 63—68.) But no one thinks of arguing thus, because it would be absurd to talk of renewing the terms of the Theocratical covenant after the new one has been established. Much less can the question be urged for restoring a nation of infidel and manifestly rebellious Jews. Eusebius has a remarkable passage on this subject, *Demonstrat. Evang.* lib. ii. cap. 1 :—τοῦτο δ' ἦν τοῖς ἐκ περιτομῆς μέγα ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἀνχοῦσι καὶ σεμνυνομένοις, ὡς τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνους αὐτοὺς τῶν λοιπῶν ἐθνῶν προτιμήσαντος, καὶ μόνους τῶν θείων ἐπαγγελιῶν κατηζωκότος, ἐπιδειξάς ὡς οὐδὲν κρεῖττον παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἅπαντας ἰδίως αὐτοῖς ἐν ταῖς θείαις ἐπαγγελίαις ὑποσχέσιν, &c.

* A remarkable instance of the adaptation of the language of the Old Testament to the times of the New is to be found in Heb. xii. 22 : “ *But ye are come unto Mount Zion,*” &c.

† If it be argued, that the gift of this land was prior to the times of the Theocracy, I shall answer : So was the institution of sacrifice, of circumcision, the distinction of clean and unclean animals ; all of which, however, expired with the Theocracy.

favourite passages usually cited and dwelt upon in discussing this question, are to be found in the book of Zechariah ; and these we shall now notice.

It is evident, from the first chapter of this prophet, that he began to prophesy in the second year of Darius. This was after the liberation by Cyrus ; and in all probability his prophecies were delivered at Jerusalem. From the nature of this chapter, there is great reason to believe that it was delivered when the enemies of the Jews were harassing them in their work : and, if we turn to Ezra, vi. 13, 14, we shall find that this was actually the fact. It was, therefore, the business of this prophet to strengthen the hands of the Jews, and to assure them that Jerusalem should again prosper (chap. i. from ver. 15, to the end). Then, chap. ii. 4, it is foretold, that Jerusalem shall be so repeopled as to spread out on every side, just as if it had no walls. At verse 7, it is said, “ *Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.*” By which, I suppose, we are to understand, that many Jews still remained at Babylon, and that Zechariah wished to encourage them to return. We have nothing, therefore, in this chapter, which relates to any restoration after the times of the Messiah. In the 3d chapter, Joshua the high priest is encouraged to proceed with his work, which seems to be specified in Ezra, iii. 2, 3, as consisting in erecting the altar, &c. ; and to this, reference is again made in Zech. iv. 6—10. Joshua is also encouraged to proceed with building the temple in chap. vi. 11, 12. See also Ezra, v. 1, 2. Again, Zech. viii. 3 : “ *Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, &c. . . .* 4. There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age,” &c. *i. e.* Afflicted, troubled, and thinly inhabited as this place now is, it shall nevertheless again be full and prosperous : which is confirmed by the sixth verse : “ *If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in THESE DAYS, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes?*” &c. This, I think, confines the prophecy to those times. In ver. 7, it is said : “ *I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country,*” &c. This, it is said, cannot refer to the captives at Babylon. I answer : It appears that the Jews had been dispersed among other nations also. So says

the last verse of the preceding chapter: "*I scattered them with a whirlwind among ALL THE NATIONS whom they knew not.*" The same thing is affirmed in Nehemiah, ix. 30; and again, in Dan. ix. 7.* The promise given from ver. 11 to 15, which is often applied to future times, is, in the last, restricted to those immediately succeeding the captivity. From verse 20 to the end of this chapter, the prediction made manifestly relates to the times of the Apostles, a circumstance which need not surprise us; it being usual with the prophets to pass on from the prosperity of Jerusalem to that of the universal church.† And, if this be the case, we have nothing here about the restoration of the Jews. In chap. x. 6, &c. similar promises are made, not one of which can imply any thing more than those already noticed. At ver. 9: "*And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries, and they shall live with their children, and turn again.*" This passage will admit of another translation, and one which, I hold, will better represent the sense of the original: *Though I sow them among the people, and they among the distant countries remember me, then shall they live with their children, and shall return.* In this sense, the passage is a mere echo of the prediction mentioned in Deut. xxx. 1, which we have inspired authority to assure us relates to this dispersion and captivity, as shewn below: or, it may refer to the apostolic times. At the next ver. (10,) it is said: "*I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt,*" &c. In a former prophecy, it was said, that they should be brought from the west, by which, it is probable, Egypt was meant. The passages there cited must suffice on this subject. In the next chapter (xi.), the final rejection of the Jews is predicted, which is ascribed, just as it is by St. Paul, to their excessive impiety. Chap. xii. 1—9, may refer to the victories ob-

* Upon what particular occasions these early dispersions took place, we are not informed; but we find, from Joel, iii. 6, that the neighbouring nations had been in the habit of selling captive Jews to the Greeks and other nations: and it is expressly promised, at ver. 7, that these shall be brought back. To what extent this had been carried on, it is impossible to say; but that it was considerable, is evident from this place. Several other such intimations as these occur, as in Amos, i. 6—9. ii. 6. Obadiah, ver. 20.

† See ver. 9, &c. of the next chapter (ix).

tained by Judas Maccabæus, but more suitably to those of the latter times, and may now have been given for the purpose of encouraging the Jews during the building of the second temple. From verse 9 to the end, the subject is the Messiah's death, and the compunction which the pious Jews should feel on this account; and with this commences the following chapter, xiii. 1, 2. The remainder of this chapter treats on the impiety of the Jews, the death of the Messiah, and their consequent overthrow. A remnant, however, shall be saved; so says St. Paul. These, therefore, must now constitute the true Church.

In the xivth chapter, the prophet foretells (ver. 1, 2,) the final destruction of Jerusalem. One half shall go into captivity, the impious portion shall be overthrown, while the REMNANT shall still be preserved. At ver. 3, 4: The Lord shall espouse the cause of these against all nations who shall oppose them; and even mountains shall be removed in this conflict. This probably relates to the general persecutions. At ver. 5, the flight to the mountains, commanded by our Lord, seems to be intimated. See Matt. xxiv. 16. Mark, xiii. 14. Luke, xxi. 21. At ver. 6 and 7, I suppose the conflict between true and false religion is pointed out, which, however, ends in the prevalence of the light.* Then, at ver. 8 and 9, The living waters proceed from Jerusalem; that is, the apostolic doctrine makes its way thence throughout the earth; and the Lord in consequence becomes the acknowledged king of the whole world, whereas before this period he was only known in Jewry. In ver. 10, I think we have the change, sometimes styled the new heaven and earth (Is. lxxv. 17,) intimated. The whole land, it is said, shall be *turned about*, i. e. changed, and shall be *exalted*, its views elevated, and in this state be inhabited; and, in the next verse, it is added, "*there shall be no more destruction;*" which is just what Isaiah says, alluding to the same circumstances and times: see chap. lx. ver. 15—22. The plagues of God's enemies, noticed at ver. 12, 13, need not be dwelt upon: they are the general threats expressed against those who oppose his truth, and seem to have been remarkably felt

* See the comment on the Revelations farther on, chap. xx. xxi. See also Eusebius, Dem. Evang. lib. ii. cap. 4. sec. liii.

during the persecutions. At ver. 14, Judah fights at Jerusalem, that is, now at the New Jerusalem ; which is a subject worthy of prophetic intimation : in any other sense, there is nothing worth remark in Judah's fighting at Jerusalem. The most remarkable part of this verse, however, is, the declaration, that the wealth of the heathen shall be collected there ; a subject also fully entered into by Isaiah, chap. lx. ver. 11—16, 17. *ib.* lxvi. 12, which see. At ver. 15, the plagues of God's enemies are again reverted to. See on Rev. chap. vi. &c. And at ver. 16, all who remain, and have not been cut off, shall come up to worship the Lord at Jerusalem, *i. e.* shall be brought into his Church. See Is. lx. 13, 14. It is worthy of remark, in this place, that *the feast of tabernacles** is mentioned, as one of those which are to be kept by the new Church ; and the question is : What are we to understand by this ? Is it to be the ancient feast of tabernacles, instituted in commemoration of the egress from Egypt ; or, any other which may be considered as analogous with that ? I answer : If a real change has now taken place in the nature of the Church, as appears to be intimated by the text noticed above, I suppose we must have recourse to analogy, in order to make out this expression ; just as St. Paul has in the *case of circumcision*, which he says must now be that of the heart†—of the *spiritual Jew* ; who, we are told, is that man, and that only, who holds the faith of Abraham. The principle is

* So in Malachi, chap. iii. 3, the offerings made by the Levites are alluded to ; and it is added, that after the times in which the Lord shall have come to his temple, these Levites shall *offer an offering* in righteousness. “ *Then,*” it is said, “ *the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant,*” &c. But St. Paul tells us, that there is a change in the priesthood ; intimating that the tribe of Levi has now no exclusive right to that office. How then is the prophet and apostle to be reconciled ? By supposing, I believe, that those, who are now priests in the spirit of the declaration and not in the letter, shall so offer ; and not that the Levites shall be again brought back to Palestine, in order to satisfy such expressions. Besides, even in the prophet, we have the distinction sufficiently kept up. At ver. 16 of this chapter, and ver. 2 of the following, they *who fear the Lord*, not the mere Jew, are those who are to be preserved : and this will apply just as well to a pious Christian, as it could at any time to a pious Jew. In this prophet, therefore, we have no restoration of the Jews to Palestine. Again, in Haggai, chap. ii. 6—9, we have similar intimations of the coming of Christ ; but, in no case, any of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine.

† Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; iii. 30 ; iv. 11, 12. Gal. iii. 29.

thus stated by him in Heb. vii. 12: "*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law.*" And in ver. 18, the reason is thus given: "*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof:*" i. e. The theocratical system being totally unsuitable to the wants of mankind generally, or to any thing like the system which prevailed under Melchisedec, it has been changed.

According to our principle, therefore, which is but an echo of that propounded by St. Paul, we must not, after the Theocracy has manifestly come to an end, interpret prophetic declarations, using, it may be, terms which had been applied under that state, in their literal or theocratical sense; because a change being made in the law, its terms must now be taken in a new sense and bearing; in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. I have been the more particular on this point, because it has proved a rock on which most of the commentators have foundered, notwithstanding the care taken by the Apostle to provide against it. That Jews should err in this respect, is just what might be expected; and in them it manifests consistency at least: but that Christians should, is perfectly astonishing; nor do I know of any reason that can be assigned, unless it be, that prejudice and hypothesis are far more potent than people generally are willing to allow. But to proceed—

I pass over vers. 17, 18, 19, as containing nothing but what is sufficiently obvious to every one. In ver. 20, 21, the general prevalence of the truth is pointed out; and, as this falls within the times of the new dispensation, it must signify the truth of the Gospel. This last chapter of Zechariah is certainly the most difficult of any to be found among his writings, and it is one which is often cited to prove that the Jews shall again be restored to Palestine. According to my view of it, however, it has no such signification; but, on the contrary, contains one of the most particular and animating predictions of the final prevalence of Christianity, any where to be found in Holy Writ. It will be objected, perhaps, that I have given new interpretations to some of the passages adduced. My defence is: I have given those only which appear to me to be required by the context. Infallible and authoritative interpretations I know not where to find, unless

it be in those places of Scripture which a careful examination of its context shews to be parallel. These I have used to the best of my ability; and I trust it will be found, that I have not been rash in availing myself of their assistance. If I have passed more rapidly over the preceding chapters of this prophet, it has been, because I believed no real difficulty presented itself.

A question may now arise as to the interpretation of those passages generally in which the Jews are addressed, either in their own proper title of *children of Israel*, *Jews*, or in the figurative one of *Jerusalem*, *Zion*, *daughter of Jerusalem*, *my people*, &c. How, it may be asked, are such places to be understood? In their primitive and proper sense, or in one in some respects analogous? I answer: This will depend upon circumstances, for the following reasons: 1. It is quite obvious, that even during the times of the Theocracy, *all were not ISRAEL that were of Israel*. In a state founded for the most part upon religious considerations, religious faith and conduct in individuals were circumstances not to be overlooked. For example, all who came out of Egypt had received the general promise of being put in possession of the land of Canaan. Yet the fact is, not one of those who had arrived at maturity, if we except Joshua and Caleb, not even Moses himself, was permitted to set a foot in that happy land. And why? They fell through unbelief. They forfeited the condition on which the promise rested; and, on that account, they died in the wilderness. The same may be said of all those who perished, from time to time, during the reigns of the judges and kings of Israel. The same cause brought about the Babylonian captivity, and finally the overthrow of the Jewish polity. There was, consequently, always to be found among this people, a party who had no right whatsoever either to the title of Israelite, or to any of the privileges depending thereon; and, for this reason, Isaiah styles them *rulers of Sodom*, and *people of Gomorrah*,* *Jerusalem a harlot*, its inhabitants *murderers*, its princes *rebellious*, *companions of thieves*, and even the *adversaries of the Lord*. Now, let it be asked: Are these persons in any way so

* Chap. i. 9. See also Euseb. Demonst. Evang. lib. ii. capp. iii. iv.

situated as to entitle them to expect the covenanted mercies of God? The answer, I think, must be: Certainly not. They are rebels to all intents and purposes: all they can expect from God must be punishment. To this effect are the words of Isaiah, in the chapter cited: "Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin. . . . And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." But, it is added, "*Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*" I think we may conclude, then, that, even during the Theocracy, *he was not a Jew* who was one outwardly; *neither was that circumcision* which was outward in the flesh. *But he was a Jew* who was one inwardly; and circumcision was that of *the heart, in the spirit*, and not merely in the letter, whose praise was not of men, but of God.* I say, the nature of the case was such, that nothing short of the faith of Abraham could constitute a child of Abraham, even at this time: the Jews generally, indeed, imagined quite the contrary; but against them may all the prophets, beginning with Moses and ending with the last inspired writer, be cited, in direct and unequivocal condemnation. To an attentive reader of the prophets, it will appear that *two parties* among the Jews are constantly addressed; one, against which threats are denounced, and which we generally find executed: another, to which promises of blessings both spiritual and temporal are made; and these we see as invariably realised. In interpreting the prophets, therefore, we must never lose sight of these distinctions: a little care will always enable us to discover to which of these parties their admonitions are directed; and, when this is ascertained, we must interpret accordingly. Instances are to be found, I know, in which the transitions are rapid; but when we are apprised of this, and have been sufficiently accustomed to their mode of writing, no difficulty whatever will arise from it. The order usually taken is, to commence with threats against the disobedient; and, when

* See Rom. ii. 28, 29. Deut. x. 6; xxx. 6, &c.

these have been delivered, then to turn to the better part, and to afford them the consolations which have been always annexed to true religion. An example of this may be found in the first chapter of Isaiah. The whole book itself too is of this sort: the first thirty-nine chapters proceed generally with predictions of vengeance, with a few instances of promises interspersed; the last twenty-six are more particularly charged with blessings for the believers, occasionally also interspersed with threatenings.

In all cases, therefore, we must determine by the context, whether the terms *Jew*, *Israel*, *Jerusalem*,* *Zion*,† *my people*, &c., are to be taken in a good or a bad sense. These titles themselves will determine nothing here; but I know of no

* See Mr. Horne's Index of the Symbolical Language of Scripture, Introd. &c. vol. iv. p. 543. edit. 6.

† We have a very remarkable instance of misapplication of Scripture with regard to this rule, in a sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Simeon, some years ago, before the University of Cambridge,¹ on Jer. xxx. 17: "*This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.*" The chapter evidently commences with a promise of return from the captivity. See v. 2. This captivity, we know, was intended to purge away the dross of Zion, and to take away all her tin. (Is. i. 25). But in the event, the idolaters of Zion joined the idolaters of Babylon; and a few, a mere remnant, returned, who still preferred Jerusalem and its services. This remnant, according to another prophet, was brought through the fire of affliction, and refined, in order that they should offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness (Zech. xiii. 9). *Zion* is, here, therefore, put for the true Church, or believing part of the Jews, who were to be brought out of captivity. At page 20 of the sermon, he says: "On behalf of the *unhappy Jews*, no such effort, yea, no effort at all, has been ever made: no; they may be left to perish." He adds: "*They are the Zion, whom no man seeketh after.*" And, generally, the sermon proceeds on the assumption, that this title is applicable to the *unbelieving* Jews of this day. To this I strongly object. Jeremiah applied the term in no such sense. For the idolaters of Babylonia he does not seem to have had any consolations; much less did he term them the *Zion of God*. The infidel Jews are now precisely in the same situation: they are no part of the commonwealth of Israel; but have been formally rejected: and St. Paul accordingly affirms, that they have been broken off; St. Peter, that they are *not a people*; and St. John, in the Apocalypse, that *they are the synagogue of Satan*. Mr. Simeon's view of the subject is that held by the Jews themselves; and is far more likely to contribute to harden their hearts, than to bring them to the faith of Christ.

¹ University Sermons, &c. London, 1828.

case in which the context will not easily supply the needful information. Having established this principle then, let us now see, how it will bear upon the doctrine of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. This doctrine is, I believe, mostly held in this sense, namely, that the Jews, unbelievers in Christ as they now are, will sometime be restored to Palestine;—that the promises in which this doctrine is found are made to them as a *nation of Jews*, independently of any other consideration. My first remark is: I know of no passage to be found in any part either of the Old or the New Testament, in which it is unequivocally stated that the Jews shall again be restored to Palestine; and my second, that if there is, and that directed to the Jews in a state of unbelief and absolute rejection from the covenanted mercies of God, we have something remarkably anomalous, and apparently too inconsistent ever to have come from the prophets of Israel. But let us see some of the passages usually appealed to in support of this doctrine. In Deut. xxx. 1—5,* it is said, we have a most clear prediction of the future restoration of the Jews to Palestine. See the place. My answer is: This prophecy has been applied, *by* INSPIRED AUTHORITY, to the time of the Babylonian captivity. Dan. ix. 11. “Therefore, the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of *Moses*, the servant of God, *because we have sinned against him.*” And verse 13: “*As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us,*” &c. From verse 24 to the end, we have the answer to Daniel’s prayer, which indeed contains much more than even he had prayed for, viz. the gift and sufferings of the Messiah, with the termination of the Jewish polity. At verse 25, the restoration of Jerusalem is mentioned, which necessarily includes the return from Babylon. The same prophecy is again referred to in Nehemiah, chap. i. 8, 9, &c.; and Ezra, ix. 7. This prophecy, therefore, is so far from promising any thing unconditionally to the Jews as a nation, that it actually does the very reverse: it threatens them with punishment in the case of their committing sin, but promises mercy upon their sin-

* See also the parallel places. Lev. xxvi. 33. Deut. iv. 26; xxviii. 64. and Jer. xv. 14; xvi. 13; evidently relating to the captivity.

cerely repenting; and in this sense has it been taken by the inspired writers above cited.* In the second place, these authorities restrict this prediction to the times of the Babylonian captivity, and not to any future restoration of the Jews. We may leave this prophecy, therefore, as affording a most decisive testimony against this doctrine of Jewish restoration to Palestine.

Another place pointed out as decisive on this question, is Ezek. xxxvi. I remark: This prophecy was most likely written in Babylon; and this is evident from verse 17: "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt *in their own land, they defiled it,*" &c.; which could hardly have been written in Palestine. The return promised here, therefore, was, in all probability, the return from the captivity. And, if we read and examine this and the two following verses, we shall find, that the prophecies of Moses just alluded to, and explained by inspired authority as relating to the captivity, &c. are again cited. This restoration, therefore, as before, is not unconditional; nor is it future, for the reasons already given.

Another prediction is Ezek. xxxvii. 16, &c. in which we are told, that the two houses of Ephraim and Judah shall be united, carried back to their own land, have one king, and be no more separated. The interpretation put upon this prophecy rests principally on the assumption, that the house of Israel, or Ephraim, including the ten tribes, never did

* For my own part, I do not think that the places here referred to contain any *particular prophecy*; but only general declarations, as to the punishments or blessings which should fall upon the Jews, in case of their disobedience or obedience respectively. The statements begin at chap. xxvii. of Deut., and end with chap. xxx. 10. That they should be driven out of that land by their enemies, and carried into captivity, was but a necessary consequence of disobedience; because the tenure of Canaan was with them a part of God's covenant: and, upon his deserting them, their enemies must necessarily prevail, since they were neither a numerous nor a warlike nation. The prophets, Daniel, &c. therefore cite this Scripture, rather to shew the justice of the punishments inflicted on them for transgression, than for any thing else: and in this sense it may be cited with reference to the final rejection of the Jews; for this was done in consequence of their iniquity, and in direct accordance with its declarations: in this respect too may its promissory part also be cited with regard to the conversion of the Jews to Messiah their Prince; but, as in this case the Theocracy has ceased, no privilege formerly possessed in Canaan, as a country, can be expected by them: between the Jew and the Greek there is now no difference in any case.

return to Palestine ; but is yet to be discovered and brought back, when this supposed restoration is to take place. My remark is : This assumption is without foundation ; and, all the probability we have is against it. It is true, we are nowhere formally told, that persons of all the twelve tribes returned at the general delivery from Babylon ; but we have every reason for believing that this was the fact. Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, with the Nethinims, we are told, did return ; and we are further told, that after the captivity the Jews dwelt in their several cities. Neh. xi. 3. But as this is a remarkable passage, it deserves particular notice. It stands thus : “ But in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in *their cities* (to wit), *Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon’s servants.*” By the cities of Judah may be understood, only those cities which lay within the limits ascribed to the tribe of Judah ; and in this sense the words are often taken. If so, then did the children of Benjamin also take up their residence in the cities which belonged to this tribe : for no one will deny, that this tribe returned from the captivity. But this cannot be true : *Every one*, it is said, *dwelt in his possession*, i. e. in the possession proper for his tribe, as far as that was practicable. Benjamin, therefore, in all probability, resided in his own paternal inheritance. But why is it said *cities of Judah* ? Because, I suppose, the supreme rule was now vested in the house which formerly went under that name, and was, without doubt, carried on in Jerusalem. And, for these reasons : 1. Prophecy had declared that they should be under David their king ; and he was of this house. 2. Samaria was held by Sanballat and his companions. That part of the Holy Land, therefore, which ever after the separation under Rehoboam had been termed *Israel*, could not now be occupied by the Jews. The general name of *Judah* was, therefore, more likely to prevail, when speaking of the state, than that of *Israel*. It is also said, *ib. v. 20.* “ And the residue of *Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.*” We may conclude then, that every one was in his inheritance, as far as that was practicable. It is here said, however, *The residue of Israel, &c.* which, I think, must mean the residue of the whole captivity of Israel ; otherwise,

it will be difficult to say, why the word *Israel* is at all introduced, either here or in ver. 3. just noticed. There are, however, other, and I think very strong, reasons for supposing, that by this term must be meant a residue of *all the tribes*. In Ezra, iii. 1, we are told, “the children of *Israel* were in the cities,” and “the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem;” and at vi. 16, “The children of *Israel*, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of *the captivity*, kept the dedication, &c. . . . and offered at the dedication . . . for a sin-offering for *all Israel*, TWELVE he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of *Israel*. . . . And the children of *Israel*, which were come again out of the captivity, &c. separated themselves . . . to seek the Lord God of *Israel*, and kept the feast,” &c. And, again, viii. 35, “*The children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel*, TWELVE bullocks, for *all Israel* . . . TWELVE he-goats for a sin-offering,” &c. And at x. 5, Ezra makes the chief priests, the Levites, and *all Israel*, to swear, &c. Again, Neh. xii. 47, *all Israel*, in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers, &c. I may now ask: How was it possible *twelve* he-goats could be offered for *all Israel*, according to the number of the tribes, if only two, or three tribes at farthest, were present; for no one will argue, that these offerings could be made by proxy?

The context, however, clearly determines the matter: They were the children of *Israel*, which were come again out of the captivity, who had separated themselves to seek the Lord, and who kept the feast. Some of every tribe, therefore, must have been present; and, by the terms *Israel*, *all Israel*, the children of *the captivity*, &c. these are most certainly meant. On any other supposition, the context is inexplicable. We may now suppose, therefore, that some out of every tribe returned from *Bayblon* at the liberation from the captivity. Let us see how the New Testament will bear out this notion. In the Acts of the Apostles we have, xxvi. 7, “Unto which (promise) *our twelve tribes*, instantly serving God day and night (not in a state of heathenism, and undiscovered), hope to come.” So St. James, i. 1, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the *twelve*

tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." "My brethren, count it all joy," &c. These last, I think, must have been persons out of all the tribes, who had embraced Christianity. And so, in each case, have the terms of prophecy literally been complied with, "*A remnant has been saved;*"* and, *the seed of Israel has not failed before the Lord.* And, in this sense are the words of St. Paul to be understood, Rom. xi. 5, "*Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*" That is, as I understand it: God has not purposely cast away his people; the fact declares the contrary: for there is at this present time in the true Church of Christ, a remnant to be found, out of every tribe. Then, again, at ver. 26, after certain preliminaries, *ALL Israel shall be saved*, i. e. in addition to those who are now saved by the faith.

From what has been said, I think it must appear, that there is no reason whatever for supposing, that only *two tribes* returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, but a remnant of them all, occasionally styled *Israel*, and said to be resident in the cities of Judah: and, if so, the opinion that Ezek. xxxvii. 16, &c. refers to some future restoration is so far untenable. Let us now examine it a little more particularly. In verses 16—20, we are shewn by a very significant act, that the two houses of Israel are to be united; and, at ver. 22, &c. it is said, in explanation, "*I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.*" "*Neither shall they defile themselves any more with idols, &c. . . . and David my servant shall be king over them,*" &c. It will not be necessary to dwell upon the facts, that after the return from Babylon,

* Isa. vii. 3, margin; x. 21, 22; xi. 11, 16; xlv. 3. Jer. xv. 11; xxiii. 3; xxxi. 9, where Ephraim is named among them. Ezek. vi. 8—10; xiv. 22. Joel, ii. 32. Amos, v. 15, *the remnant of Joseph.* Micah, ii. 12; v. 3, 7, 8, the first Apostolic Church, Zeph. iii. 13—20. So Justin Martyr: *Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ καὶ Σαμαρεῖς, ἔχοντες τὸν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον διὰ τῶν προφητῶν παραδοθέντα αὐτοῖς, καὶ αἱ προσδοκήσαντες τὸν Χριστὸν, παραγενόμενον ἠγνόησαν, πλὴν ὈΛΙΓΩΝ ΤΙΝΩΝ, οὓς προῖπε τὸ ἅγιον προφητικὸν πνεῦμα διὰ Ησαΐου σωθήσεσθαι.* (cap. i. 9. Apol. p. 102. ed. Grabbe). On this subject the primitive Fathers are strong and clear.

and when occupying the Holy Land, the Jews literally became *one united people*; and that since that period they *have never been divided*. It is also well known, that they have not since that time *defiled themselves with idols*. So far the events correspond exactly with the prediction. In the next place, they have had *no temporal king*, nor in this sense could David, after that period, be their king. If any king at all was recognised under this title, it must have been the *spiritual David*, or *Christ*: and, as the promises with which this portion of Scripture abounds, must have been made to the spiritual part of the community, in this sense must the reign of David be necessarily understood. It is further said, that “they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children *for ever*: and my servant David shall be their prince *for ever*.” (Ver. 25.) I think we may conclude, without further inquiry, that the reign of David must here, as before, be considered as *spiritual*. The term *for ever*, therefore, will, in this context, give us no sort of trouble. In the next place, their dwelling in the land of Canaan immediately after the captivity, to which this passage seems to refer, as well as those already noticed, is nothing more than what we may have expected. It is an event foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and this prophet (Ezekiel), and others, in places almost innumerable: it is what the Jews residing in Babylon must have expected; and it is what all who chose to return witnessed. But, how it may be asked, could they be said to dwell there *for ever*, since the fact of their expulsion proves the contrary? My answer is: Were the English Bible the only book we have here to do with, this question would present very great difficulties; but this is not the case. Let us, therefore, recur to the original.

The word translated here by the English words *for ever*, is עולם, *ad-olám*, i. e. *usque ad* or *in sæculum*; or the Greek εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Now, if we turn back to the original grant of this land to Abram, Gen. xiii. 15, we shall find that this is the very term used; and that it is translated by the authors of the Septuagint, by ἕως αἰῶνος. And in chap. xvii. 8, לְאֶחָזְתָּ עוֹלָם, *for a possession of the period thus designated*: Sept. εἰς κατὰσχέσιν αἰῶνιον. The same term עולם, *olám*,

is constantly applied to the statutes of the law, and particularly to those which belonged to the Theocracy. Now, if provision was made by Moses, and all the prophets, for the termination of this system,* which is the fact, this term cannot be equivalent to the English one *for ever*: and so we find, Deut. xv. 17, it is applied to the life-time of a servant; and in 1 Sam. i. 22, to that of Samuel. The sense of the word will, therefore, very much depend upon the context in which it is used: when applied to God, it will of necessity signify *for ever* or *eternal*; when applied to men or things, it must be taken in a sense suitable to such adjuncts. In the passage above cited, it must necessarily be taken in the sense usually ascribed to the duration of the Mosaic polity, how long, short, or indefinite soever, that might have been supposed to be. The sense then will be, They shall dwell therein, *ἕως αἰῶνος*,† as found in the Alexandrine copy of the Septuagint; that is, as I understand it, for a certain space of time, which is to be defined by other considerations: and, as this is the term found in the original grant, the sense which ought to be ascribed to it there, must also be ascribed to it here. What that is, the prophets and apostles must teach us; and this they have done, in shewing us when this system should necessarily end. The residence of the Israelites in Canaan, therefore, after the captivity, satisfied the terms of this prediction in every point of view. In the other case, in which the reign of the spiritual David is mentioned, the subject matter is sufficient to extend the signification of the term beyond that of the Levitical institutions: besides, it is not customary among the Orientals, invariably to give the same term the same signification, when occurring more than once in the same context; but the contrary: and this is often done in the Hebrew Bible. The expression, however, is here changed from *עַד-עוֹלָם*, *ad-ōlām*, to *לְעוֹלָם*, *lēōlām*; and this last form is preserved in each case, when the reign of the spiritual David is mentioned, as well as when the permanency of the sanctuary is promised. The meaning of the first is evidently *up to*, *ἕως*, or *usque ad*, the period so designated: the other is mostly used in a more extended significa-

* Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Acts, iii. 22—24; vii. 37.

† See Schlensner, *sub voce*.

tion. It is remarkable enough, that the terms should be so changed here; but, if a different sense is intended to be given, the reason is obvious. I would not press verbal criticism with too much rigour in questions of this kind; but when we find other circumstances conspiring, it would surely be blameable to omit it.

Again, at ver. 27, it is said: "*My tabernacle shall be with them* (in the preceding verse, *evermore*): *yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" It may be objected: God's tabernacle has not remained with the Jews *evermore*; nor have they continued to be *his people*. My answer is: I do not think it at all necessary either of these things should take place, in order to satisfy the terms of this prediction. His tabernacle remained with the *true Israelites, the remnant* spoken of by St. Paul. They continued to be his people under the old dispensation, until the new one commenced; and, when that commenced, as the same Apostle has testified, this remnant composed the main part of the first Christian churches. This objection, therefore, falls to the ground.*

The last objection, I think, that can be raised must be: Times like these predicted by the prophet have never been witnessed, either in the Jewish or the Christian Church; and, therefore, we must look for them at some future period, when they all shall be fully realised. I answer: This objection has already been noticed, and met (p. 156). The same may be said of the predictions of Moses respecting the land of Canaan; it was to flow with *milk and honey*, and so on. And yet the Jews as a nation never found any thing like this taking place. In like manner, Christianity promises to its professors *a peace which passeth all understanding*; that they shall be filled *with all the fulness of God*; that the Spirit *beareth witness within them, that they are the children of God*, and so on: but, Where shall we find a Christian state,

* After what has been said, it will be quite superfluous to examine the modern notion, viz., that the Gentiles cannot generally be brought into the Church until the Jews shall have been converted to Christianity, and sent out as missionaries. One prophecy, which is thought sufficient to prove this, I will notice: Micah, v. 7—9. I remark: The New Testament writers have limited the time in which this was to be fulfilled. See Matt. ii. 6, &c. Also Eusebius, Dem. Evang. lib. ii. cap. 4, sect. li.

Church, or even family, so supremely blest? Probably no where. Yet it is true, that Christianity has these blessings to bestow; and it is equally true, that the ways of Divine wisdom were, even in the days of Solomon, *ways of pleasantness* and *paths of peace*: and also, that the Canaan of Israel had provisions such as to bless every one of its inhabitants in a way exceeding all human expectation: but unhappily, in each case, there has been a want of faith, a defective obedience, a murmuring, unthankful, and rebellious spirit. The people, not the system, has been, in every case, to blame; although thousands of individual cases have occurred, in which the blessedness here promised has been experienced to a degree almost exceeding credibility. That peace, which passes common understandings, has been felt, confessed, and demonstrated, times innumerable; and it is so still. Those ways of pleasantness and paths of peace have, under both the old and the new dispensations, cheered the waning days of many a servant of the spiritual David, they do so now, and shall do so even to the end of time. This, then, will satisfy the terms of the revelation in every case which describes the true Church,—the *state* of the true believers, and not the men generally: and this too, I will maintain, is the only rational way in which such a Book could proceed; unless, indeed, divine energies were forcibly to control the unsteady and wayward wills of all, and make them saints whether they would or no. But, in this case, revelation would be unnecessary; all distinctions between virtue and vice would necessarily cease; and, consequently, every provision of rewards or punishments would be at an end:—a system of things which reason proclaims cannot take place on this side the grave; and which Scripture as constantly keeps out of sight. We have not the least grounds, therefore, for supposing, that every particular mentioned in the chapter above cited has not been entirely fulfilled; and may, therefore, be sufficiently accounted for, without having recourse to a future restoration of infidel Jews to Palestine.

A portion, however, of the New Testament has been chosen, and so interpreted by some, as to make it appear that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine is also there taught. Let us briefly consider it.

On the election and calling of the Jews, as taught by St. Paul in the 10th and 11th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

In chap. x. 3, we have the principles first stated, by which the rejection of Israel was effected, as formerly remarked : “ For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*” Some particulars are then given on this subject ; and at verse 11 it is said : “ For the Scripture saith : *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For,” it is added, “ *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” From these passages, I think, it is sufficiently clear, that, as the grace of God in Christ was intended to be made known to the Gentiles, who should also receive it ; all the advantages of religion, which the Jews had formerly possessed exclusively, had now been proposed to all men, without respect of persons ; faith being the means, and the only means, proposed as introductory to their attainment. Every religious privilege, therefore, had now been equally laid open to all believers. But the Jew, in refusing to receive Christ the real end of the law, had mistaken the Scriptures, had endeavoured to establish his own righteousness independently of that proposed by God, which could be obtained only through faith in the atonement.

But this is not all : St. Paul further tells us, that this obduracy of theirs had also been foretold. “ But,” adds he, “ they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report ?* (v. 16). And again (ver. 19, 20, 21) : “ But I say, Did not Israel know ? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.†

* See Is. liii. where the rejection and death of Christ are plainly foretold.

† Deut. xxxii. 15—43. In ver. 29, אֲחֵרִיתָם, their latter (end), I believe alludes to the end of their polity ; and in consonance with this view, in ver. 43, the nations are called upon to rejoice with his people, *i. e.* with those of the Jews who should believe. This chapter appears, therefore, to be a prophecy of the defection of the Jews, and of their consequent rejection by God.

Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found *of them that sought me not*; I was made manifest *unto them that asked not after me*. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands *unto a disobedient and gainsaying people*.* I think we may safely conclude, upon this, that the calling in of the Gentiles, and the rejection, as well as the disobedience, of the Jews, were plainly foretold by the prophets. Passages to this effect may be multiplied to an indefinite extent; but these, explained and applied as they are here by the Apostle, will be quite sufficient to satisfy every reasonable person on this subject. We may then conclude thus far, that the Jew had actually ceased to be a part of the Church of God, through unbelief. The Gentile had become a party in the true Church, through faith; and both these things had been foreseen and predicted.

Let us now proceed to inquire into the drift and scope of the 11th chapter. The first question is: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am

* It is impossible to imagine any thing more explicit on this subject than Isaiah is, in the chapter (lxv.) from which this citation is made. "I am sought," says God by his prophet, "of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name:" which must mean the Gentiles. Then of Israel, he says: "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." (ver. 6.) "I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom," &c. Then at ver. 8, the remnant to be saved is mentioned: "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah *an inheritor of my holy mountains*: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." Here we have St. Paul's *elected remnant*. (ver. 11.) "But YE are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear," &c. Here is, certainly, a most clear distinction between the fate of the believing and unbelieving Jews: the one party is termed God's elect; while the other, purely through unbelief, is numbered out for the slaughter. See ver. 13—16, to the same effect. And in ver. 15, we are told that God's servants are to be called by *another name*. Now what can this imply? I suppose the new dispensation; and this supposition the context confirms. (ver. 17.) "Behold, I create *new heavens, and a new earth*: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." This chapter, therefore, is strictly consonant with the reasoning of St. Paul; so much so, that it will admit of no other interpretation.

an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." Here, I think, we may find the solution of all the difficulty before us : we shall, therefore, first of all, endeavour to ascertain the Apostle's mind in this place.

An inattentive reader might imagine from the foregoing context, that God had systematically and intentionally rejected the whole posterity of Abraham, and that without remedy. But no : the Apostle declares he meant no such thing ; and, that his mind may not possibly be misunderstood on this important point, he adds : God forbid ! Far be it from me to make any such assertion ; for his gifts and callings are without repentance (ver. 29) ; they are unchangeable, and subject to no caprice. Christ himself was sent to the Jews, and to the Jews alone ; he was purely a minister of the circumcision, or sent only to the circumcised ; and we the Apostles were commissioned first to go to the Jews, and secondly to the Gentiles. How then can it be said, that God had intended to cast off his ancient people, when it is quite evident that to them the first offers were made ; and made to them because they were of the house of Israel, the descendants of the fathers, to whom the promises had been given. And to confirm this I say : " I also am *an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*"* I, who am one of the most favoured Apostles, am lineally and literally an Israelite ; and I look upon myself, not only as having found this inestimable salvation, but I am commissioned to preach it to you Israelites first, and secondly to the Gentiles. Israel, as such, is not then by any means rejected : no ; they are still beloved for the fathers' sake ; and this is the most welcome part of my commission to them. But, further, let me ask you, Is there any thing new in this ? Was not the same the case in the days of Elias ; for, although the nation had to an amazing degree given up the worship of Jehovah, and were therefore accused as idolaters and aliens by Elias, there was nevertheless a large number still adhering to his worship, and these he had not rejected ; they were still his people ; and they were his through his covenanted mercies

* See Eusebius, *Demonst. Evangel.* lib. ii. cap. iii. iv. &c. See also the passages of Scripture generally which speak of *the remnant*, and among these Micah, iv. 1—7.

in Abraham. The same is the case now. The Jews have generally given up the covenanted mercies of God ; they have gone about to establish a new religion founded on their own merits and righteousness ; and so far, therefore, just as in the days of Elias, they are not his people ; and because they recognise not his sovereignty. But still there is, even at this time a *remnant according to the election of grace*,* according to the covenant made with Abraham, the end of which had respect to Christ. There is, even now, in the rising church, a very considerable number, a remnant of Israel, full as large as the seven thousand was in the days of Elias ; and of these I am one. Israel then (ver. 7) generally has not attained to this privilege ; but a part of Israel, and that which constitutes the true elected church, has ; and the rest have become blind through unbelief. And, I ask, has not all this been foreseen and foretold ; and foretold too as resulting from the same cause,—namely, unbelief ? (ver. 8, 9, 10). But, further (ver. 11), this blindness will not for ever separate them from God. Mercy is still to be had ; God is still a God that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin ; only let it be remembered, mercy must be sought in his appointed way ; that is, by faith in Jesus. The consequence of their rejecting this faith, however, has been, our turning to the Gentiles ; and the conversion of the Gentiles has accordingly become a source of considerable vexation to the Jews. But, granting this, and putting the case, that the Gentiles have thus been made believers, and the world in general thus far benefited, I say, will not their return be an event of the greatest moment and blessedness ?† Who will

* So Eusebius, Demonst. Evang. lib. ii. cap. iv. § xl. Οὐ μόνον προῆλθεν (Μαθηταὶ καὶ Ἀπόστολοι τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν) τῆς ἑαυτῶν χώρας, ἀλλὰ κατάρθωσαν τὸ προστιθεόμενον. τοῦτο δὲ αὐτὸ πάλιν τὸ καταλειφθὲν οἰοῦναι τὸ σπέρμα τῆς ἀποσπάσεως τοῦ Ἰακώβ γέγονε, πιστοὺς ἐπὶ Θεὸν ἰσχύοντα. (Is. x. 21). See also *ib.* § l. and liii.

† Ver. 12. Theodoret interprets this as referring to past time, thus : If, the greater part of them remaining unbelievers, and the smaller number of believers carried the riches of the knowledge of God to the Gentiles, it is evident that if all had believed, they would have been the means of far greater good to mankind generally. For more easily would others have believed, had not they contradicted, but had with us preached the truth. His words are—Εἰ γὰρ τῶν πλείων ἀπιστησάντων, οἱ ἐξ αὐτῶν πιστισυκότες τοῖς ἔθνεσι τῆς θεωρησίας τὸν πλοῦτον προσέειχκαν, δηλονότι πάντες πιστεύσαντες μειζόνων ἀγαθῶν ἀνθρώποις ἰγίνοντο ἢν πρόξενον· ἴσασιν γὰρ ἐπίστινον πάντες, οὐκίτι τούτων ἀντιλεγόντων, ἀλλὰ μὲν ἡμῶν τῇ ἀλήθειᾳ χρηττομένων. And Jerome : Si pauci eorum credentes,

not rejoice when the Jew, who now blindly resigns his birth-right, shall come back to the means of grace and the hope of glory, of which it never was God's intention he should be deprived; but rather that he should be the first both to receive and to enjoy? This is the question I daily labour to bring before them,—these are the privileges to which it is my object to raise their ambition, being as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, yet a Jew in the full sense of that term. Now let me ask: If by their fall the nations have thus been blessed, will not their rising again be as life from the dead? * Will it not be something like the return of the prodigal in the Gospel, a theme in which the whole family on earth and in heaven will rejoice? Will it not be said, This my son was lost and is found, was dead and is alive? Will not the believing church throughout the world acknowledge this, and make it a subject for gratitude and praise to Almighty God? Nor let the Gentile believer boast, for he stands only *by faith*; but let him rather learn, that the Jew fell through unbelief; and, that if God spared not his *first adopted*, who thus sinned against him, neither will he spare *his second*. Besides, as already stated, if they abide not in unbelief, they shall be brought in again, which, however, will not take place before Christ's kingdom is established among the nations: † and (ver. 26) so shall *all* Israel be saved; as it is written, The deliverer shall come from Zion, the true church, and shall yet turn away ungodliness from Jacob. O the depth of the riches of God! who never systematically excluded from his favours either the Jew or the Gentile. The one lost his privileges by refusing to retain God in all his thoughts; the other, by endeavouring to establish his own righteousness: yet to both is proposed the means of a return,—namely, faith in the atonement of Christ: and for each is likewise reserved the just judgment of God, if he refuse to attend to this proposal.

omnes vos ad salutem vocârunt: quanto magis si omnes crediderunt, prodesse poterant vobis per doctrinam."

* So Jerome: "Item hac dicit; quoniam sicut gentes per fidem assumptæ sunt, ita etiam Judæi si crediderint, ex mortuis ad vitam transibunt." Theodoret says, that upon their believing, nothing further would remain to take place but the general resurrection.

† Cited from Luke, xxi. 24.

We have nothing here, therefore, in any case intimating a return of the Jews to Palestine; nor which places them, in any sense, in a situation different from that of the Gentile. All here rests solely on the mercy of God, as first revealed in the promise of the Redeemer, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and to be realised by faith, which had been equally proposed to the Jew and the Gentile. In this respect, therefore, there is clearly no difference.

But, to return to our investigations of the Old Testament. Another passage chosen is Ps. cii. 13, &c. "*Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.*" My remark is: Nothing can be more likely than that this Psalm alludes to the return from Babylon; and that it was written there about the close of the times of the captivity. The *set time* of that captivity, we know, was seventy years; and we also know, that this is the only limited captivity to which this Scripture can be referred. The parallel passage is to be found in Zech. i. 12—17, which affords an ample comment on it; and one upon which the reader may safely rely. If any argument be urged from ver. 15, where it is said, "*So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth* thy glory.*" My reply is: The utmost period to which this can be extended must be the Apostolic age, when the knowledge of Christ's power was brought even to all the kings of the earth; if, indeed, it be at all necessary to carry it any farther forward than the times of the delivery from the captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which I doubt. The Persian kings, beginning with Cyrus, and ending with Artaxerxes, granted to this people great and important privileges, and to these the viceroys and others their enemies were compelled to give way, and to contribute. After these, Alexander also granted them certain favours; and his successors felt their power. I do not see any necessity, therefore, here to look forward to any indefinite period for the fulfilment of this prophecy.

* So in the second Psalm, ver. 2: "*The kings of the earth,*" מַלְכֵי אֲרָץ. cii. 16, כָּל-מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ. In the first case, the reguli surrounding Judea seem to have resisted David's claim; in the second, the Persian kings, with their servants, assisted the Jews.

As I know of no instances occurring in the Prophets more difficult of application than those above noticed, I do not think it necessary to offer any thing more on this subject. Proceed we now, therefore, to other matter connected with the interpretation of prophecy.

SECTION III.

ON THE DOUBLE SENSE OF PROPHECY, &c.

FROM allusions made in the New Testament to the typical or symbolical character of a considerable part of the Old, it has been supposed by some, that not only has prophecy of every sort a double sense, but also, that the very *histories* of the Old Testament will admit of a double interpretation. Let us consider how far these notions are justifiable: and let us begin with prophecy. Those predictions, to which we have given the general title of *particular prophecy*, cannot, in the nature of things, admit of more than one fulfilment.*

* In Mr. Forster's book, noticed above, we have a direct appeal to the "*double accomplishment*" of prophecy, as it is sometimes termed: and, as Mr. Forster's hypothesis rests very much on this as a principle, it may be worth while to see what he has to advance in favour of it. "In each progeny," says he, (p. 71, first vol.), "the promise of Jehovah has, *in point of fact*, had a double accomplishment, a temporal and a spiritual," &c. Again, at p. 88, "The promise to Isaac had, *in point of fact*, first a temporal fulfilment in the establishment of his race in Canaan; and, secondly, a spiritual fulfilment in the advent of the Messiah. . . . In the promise to Ishmael. . . . there seems to be just reason to look for an analogous *double* fulfilment. . . . a full and exact *parallel* is presented in the appearance of Mahomet." Let us see how this will hold. In the first place, then, a promise is certainly made to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. See Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18. Acts, iii. 25. Gal. iii. 8. We may therefore conclude at once, that a spiritual blessing was here intended. Turn now to Gen. xiii. 14—17, and there we shall find the temporal blessing, or the promise made, that the land of Canaan shall be given to him and to his seed for ever. See also chap. xii. 7; xv. 18; xvii. 8. We have then for these *two* events *two* distinct promises, and these given on more occasions than one. There can be no necessity here, consequently, to give a double interpretation or to suppose a double accomplishment, to belong to any one of these promises; both things are distinctly promised, and both have been distinctly fulfilled. In the second place, as there is no necessity whatever here for a double interpretation, neither can there, on Mr. Forster's own shewing, in the case of the temporal promise made to Ishmael, (no spiritual one being at all mentioned).

Take, for example, the predictions respecting our blessed Lord, that he was to be born of a virgin,—to be of the seed of Abraham, of the house and lineage of David,—to be born at Bethlehem,—to be despised and rejected of men,—to suffer for the sins of many,—and by his vicarious suffering to justify many. These predictions, I think, all will allow will admit of only one application and sense. The same may be said of the prediction of delivery from Egypt,—of the possession of Canaan,—of the captivity to Babylon,—of the general delivery by Cyrus from this,—of the final dissolution of the Jewish polity,—the opening of the Church to the Gentiles, and innumerable others.

The typical part of the ceremonial law involved, not *general*, but *particular*, *prophecy*. It all shadowed forth Christ:* its acts were equivalent in bearing to verbal declarations enouncing the same things; and, as these can admit of but one interpretation, the symbols which were their equivalents can admit of no more.† A most admir-

But, Mr. Forster finds certain resemblances in the cases of these two persons (Isaac and Ishmael), which he terms analogy or parallelism; and, he then argues, that as these remarkable coincidences appear as facts, it is also probable, that as Isaac's promise included a spiritual dominion, so must that also given to Ishmael; and, by way of confirmation of this, he offers the consideration, that Ishmael was circumcised just as Isaac was, *i. e.* both received the patriarchal religion. My remark is: If we are to argue from *resemblances* only, then may we conclude, that a counterfeit and a genuine coin have equally received the stamp of authority, or, that an impostor, no less than a true prophet—the wolf in wool, just as much as the true member of Christ's sheepfold, bears about him the mark of the heavenly Shepherd. But I leave this matter. In other places (pp. 130-31, &c.) we are told that we must compare the promises with the events, &c., which is unobjectionable when accompanied with the other considerations necessary for the interpretation of prophecy; but, when standing alone, it will constitute nothing more than mere *resemblances*, which may occur again and again, and so leave promises and predictions as vague and pliable as any theorist on earth can wish. Many and overwhelming objections may be opposed even to Mr. Forster's resemblances, of which, however, he seems not to be aware; but these I leave to others: my only concern is with Mr. Forster's principles, and these I believe are fallacious.

* Col. ii. 17; Heb. x. 1.

† We meet, however, with instances of apparently double interpretation in the Scripture itself. See 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10; 1 Tim. v. 18, cited from Deut. xxv. 4; Gal. iv. 22—26, taken from Gen. xviii. 10, &c. I will only say, with regard to these and similar passages, that if they were originally given

able comment on these has been given to us by St. Paul; which, upon mature consideration, will, I think, be found to concur with the views here offered. It has been usual, however, to step out from these ceremonial and symbolical representations, and to take both persons and circumstances peculiar to the Jews, as typical also of Christ. Moses, we know, was in many respects *like* Christ;* but it will not hence follow, as far as I can see, that he was therefore typical of Christ. Nor does the Scripture allow us to make even David, Solomon, or any other person, mentioned in its pages, typical of the Messiah. David, it is true, was termed the anointed, or Messiah; and so was every priest, prophet, and king, among the Jews. David, moreover, held the kingdom which was peculiarly Christ's: but then, in this sense, he was only Christ's vicegerent, not a type of him. David, too, in many of his Psalms, passes from his own sufferings to those of the Messiah; from his own conquests to those of his Lord; and so do all the prophets: it is a sort of writing peculiar to the Scriptures. Our Lord often passes on from the circumstances around him, to those of a more sublime and spiritual nature, as in his address about the labourers being sent into God's harvest. But these circumstances cannot be cited as constituting types: there is something, undoubtedly similar in the circumstances, and on this account they are mentioned; but they are not, therefore, either symbolical or typical.† They are only

as symbolical, like Isaiah and his children (Is. viii. 18), or Ezekiel, as mentioned above, of which St. Paul had authority sufficient to determine, then must they have been capable of receiving *one* fulfilment, and no more. It is not in our power either to "*speak particularly*" (Heb. ix. 5) or definitively now, on many of the things intended to be shadowed out by the ancient system. Enough seems to have been given, on this subject, for the edification of the Church; and if so, it is the duty of Christian teachers to take the safe side: in other words, while they anxiously endeavour to inculcate *all* the truths of Scripture, not to incur the risk of being found guilty of adding thereto, by recurring to the dangerous, but plausible, system of allegorising, which indeed proved so fruitful a source of error in primitive times.

* See the parallel cases admirably drawn out by Eusebius, Dem. Evang. lib. iii. § ii.

† If it be objected, that these circumstances are often termed *types* (τύποι) in the Scriptures themselves; e. g. 1 Cor. x. 6, 11, &c. I answer: My question is not about the *word*, but the *thing* meant; and I shall contend,

resemblances, which in the language of poets would be termed similes.

Some arguments, however, have been offered in favour of the double interpretation of prophecy: these we shall now consider. It is said, then, that “throughout the whole of prophetic scripture, a time of retribution and of vengeance on God’s enemies is announced. It is called ‘*the day of the Lord* ;’ ‘*the day of wrath and slaughter, of the Lord’s anger, visitation, and judgment* ;’ ‘*the great day* ;’ and ‘*the last day*.’ At the same time,” it is added, “it is to be observed, that this kind of description, and the same expressions, which are used to represent this great day, are also employed by the prophets to describe the fall and punishment of particular states and empires; of Babylon, by Isaiah, (ch. xiii.); of Egypt, by Ezekiel, (chap. xxx. 2—4; xxxii. 7, 8); of Jerusalem, by Jeremiah, Joel, and by our Lord, (Matt. xxiv.); and in many of these prophecies, the description of the calamity, which is to fall on any *particular* state or nation, is so blended and intermixed with that *general* destruction, which, in the final days of vengeance, will invade all the inhabitants of the earth, that the industry and skill of our ablest interpreters have been scarcely equal to separate and assert them.”

There is, I think, only one objection to all this, which is: That it states too much in the outset. It takes for granted, that certain expressions can properly refer to only some one great event; and then it states that, notwithstanding this, it is applied also to others; and accordingly concludes that both must be meant; or, that such prophecy must have a double interpretation. But let us examine one or two of the places referred to. First it is used by Isaiah, with reference to this great event whatever that be, and also to the fall of Babylon (chap. xiii.). The first thing we learn in this chapter is, that it relates to Babylon (ver. 1). In the next place, the banner is elevated, a multitude assembled, and these come from a far country. It then is said, “the day of the Lord is at hand:” that is, a day in which he is about to punish some nation (ver. 2—5). In the next

that in such instances *similitudes*, *ensamples*, or *examples*, only were meant; but not in the sense of the types as set up in the ceremonial law.

place, the terrors which are to accompany this are stated (ver. 6—8). We have the coming of this day again noticed and followed by its consequences, the destruction of sinners, the fall of powers (the stars, constellations, &c. darkened). The punishment of the *world* (rather the *state* or *empire*) for their evil. Man to be purified or rather made scarce. The heavens to be shaken and the earth *from* its place or *station*, not *out* of its place. Then follow the particulars of the war or slaughter; and we are next informed, that the Medes shall do this; and, lastly, that the Babylonians are to be the sufferers, and that here the pride of Babylon shall end. We need not now suppose, therefore, that any thing else whatever, besides this visitation and destruction, is had in view. The prophet is simple and consistent: and the only thing which made him appear to be complex, was the unfounded canon by which it was proposed to interpret him. The next place is Ezek. xxx. 2, 4: but here we have nothing more than vengeance denounced against Egypt, which is termed, the approach of the *day of the Lord*. And why may it not? Why may not any day of vengeance be so named, particularly when God is to be the executor of such vengeance? But I leave this. Similar denunciations are uttered in chap. xxxii. 7, 8, where it is said that the lights of heaven shall be extinguished over Egypt: alluding perhaps to the general darkness witnessed there in the days of Moses. But no reason can I discover, why we are to look out for a double sense here. The most remarkable, however, of this kind of prophecy is thought to be Isaiah, chap. xxxiv. In the first place, the nations are called upon to hear the declarations of the prophet, the world and all its produce. We are then told that the indignation of the Lord is to fall on *all the nations* (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם). Their slain are to be cast out, and the mountains to be bathed in blood. The host of heaven (kingly powers) are next to be laid aside and perish as an untimely fig. In ver. 5, Idumea, and in ver. 6, Bozrah, is mentioned, as places in which this is to happen. At ver. 8, this is, as before, styled the day of the Lord's vengeance: a year in which Zion shall be vindicated. Then follows a general description of the destruction: and finally, we are directed to look back to this prediction, in order to be able to attest its truths, and to

compare it with the event of Zion's vindication. But where, I ask, is the necessity here, for looking out for any secondary interpretation? That this prediction has been fulfilled, there can be no doubt; and in a manner too, just as conformable with the prophecy as could be wished: as will be seen by comparing the fourth verse in particular with its parallel passages. Nor can the occurrence of Idumea and Bozrah, in any way invalidate this application of it, unless it can be shewn, that these really did not suffer in the great visitation which happened after our Lord's death. See Mal. i. and Is. lxiii. with the parallel places, on those subjects.

Let us now consider a few of those which are said to be cited in the New Testament in such a manner as to warrant a double interpretation. The second Psalm is, it is affirmed, primarily an inaugural hymn composed by David, &c.; but in Acts, iv. 25, it is cited as descriptive of the exaltation of the Messiah.* This may all be true, and yet no double sense lie hidden in this Psalm. David will perhaps be allowed to be Christ's vicegerent. The kingdom of Israel was His in a peculiar sense: it was a polity which stood only by faith. In this sense, the conspiracy of the nations, &c. was in reality against the Sovereign himself; it was mainly directed against the Lord (יהוה *Jehovah*); and this David expressly declares: it was against David only as his vicegerent, and in no other sense. And so the Psalm generally runs on. David considers himself merely as a servant: and hence the very little that can be applied to him in this Psalm. The same may be remarked of other prophets. They speak of their own services occasionally; but this is always done in a subdued and humble tone. I think, therefore, that the Apostles have in the Acts cited this Psalm in its proper sense; and that there is no double meaning in it.† The xxiid Psalm is said to be another example of this sort, which has been cited and applied to Christ in

* And so Justin Martyr applies this prophecy in his First Apology for the Christians, p. 78, &c. (edit. 1700.)

† And so it is taken by Justin Martyr, Apol. p. 79, 80, (ed. 1700.) See also some very excellent remarks on certain Psalms, &c. relating to Christ, in the Dialogue with Trypho, not far from the beginning, and running nearly through it.

Matt. xxvii. 46. My answer is: Still I can see no necessity whatever, for giving it a double interpretation. I think I may premise, that two persons at least speak in this Psalm; and that these were perhaps personated by a division of the choir in the Temple. The first two verses seem to be enounced by the Messiah: the 3rd, 4th, and 5th, by the choir. The 6th and 7th by the Messiah: the 8th by the people. Then from ver. 9, to the end of the 22nd, by the Messiah: and from ver. 23, to the end, by the whole choir. The greater part of this Psalm, therefore, will refer solely to the Messiah: the remainder not to the prophet, but to the people generally. There is, consequently, no double sense here: we have only a change of persons; a thing common to all the prophets. Another Psalm, said to be of this sort, is the xlvth, first composed as an epithalamium on the nuptials of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, and secondly applied to Christ, Heb. i. 8. I may ask: Who has told us that this Psalm was first composed as an epithalamium? No one who knew any thing about the matter: it is purely a conjecture, formed for the purpose of making a thing plain, which was much plainer without it. The prophet, whoever he was, seems to state his purpose in the first verse. From that to the 8th, inclusive, we have the praises of the Messiah sung in a most beautiful and engaging strain. At ver. 9, the calling in of foreign nations to his Church seems to be clearly intimated: * and hence their prosperity, glory, and greatness, is to arise. And the whole ends with religious praise, which could have been addressed to none but God. Excluding the epithalamic notion, therefore, attributed to this prophecy, every necessity for a double interpretation vanishes at once; not to insist upon the incongruity of ascribing several parts of it to Solomon in any sense whatsoever.

On Isaiah, chap. vii. 14, we are told, that in the *primary* but lower sense, the sign given was to assure Ahaz, that the land of Judea would speedily be delivered from the kings of Samaria and Damascus; . . . the *sign given* had secondarily

* So Eusebius in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, lib. v. cap. ii. p. 219. Σμύρνα, καὶ στακτή, καὶ κισσία ἀπὸ τῶν ἱματίων σου, τότε ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὡς περὶ βασιλίδος δηλούμενα καὶ θυγατρὸς τὸν πατρῶον οἶκον ἀπολιπούσης, καὶ τῷ προδηλωθέντι Χριστῷ, καὶ Βασιλεῖ, καὶ Θεῷ νυμφευθείσης, Κύριόν τε αὐτὸν ἀναγορευούσης, &c.

and mystically a respect to the miraculous birth of Christ, &c. I answer: In the first place, there appears to have been *no sign* given, if we except the prediction itself; and if the prediction alone was the sign or wonder, which I contend is the case,* then *the birth of the Messiah* was its one and sole object: and, on the faith of this, the safety of Israel entirely depended; not in its remote consequences, but in the aid which God himself would afford to his faithful people. “*If ye will not believe,*” says the prophet at ver. 9, in this very chapter, “*surely ye shall not be established.*” The only difficulty we now have to deal with, is contained in the 16th verse; and this, I think, will give us but little trouble. The 15th verse, I suppose, must refer to the child to be named Immanuel. “*Butter and honey,*” it is said, “*he shall eat,*” *on account of his knowing to refuse the evil, and to choose the good:* not, “*that he may know,*” &c. The Hebrew is לִדְעָתוֹ מָאוֹס †, *for, or because of, his knowing the refusal,* &c. That is: his character shall be such, that even when a child, he shall have knowledge sufficient to choose what is good for himself, contrary to

* The passage ought literally to be translated thus: *Therefore, or notwithstanding, the Lord himself (now) giveth you a sign or wonder: Behold the Virgin hath conceived, (prophetically, surely shall conceive,) and bears a son; and she hath called (surely shall call) his name, God is with us.* That a prediction alone is often taken for a sign, may be seen in Gen. iv. 15; Exod. iii. 12, iv. 8, 28; Deut. xiii. 2; 1 Sam. ii. 34; 2 Kings, xix. 29; Is. xxxvii. 30. See also my Hebrew Grammar, p. 344, where this view of the passage was first proposed.

† If it be objected, that Noldius has given several instances of the particle לְ in the sense of *usque dum*, as usually taken in this place, I answer: True; yet not one of them requires this sense. The first is (p. 399) לְפָרֹשׁ לָהֶם, “*that . . . might be shewed to them.*” Auth. Vers. More literally, *For explaining, in order to explanation, or the like.* Job, xxxviii. 13. לְאַחֲזוֹ בְּכַנְפוֹת “*that it might take hold of the ends.*” Auth. Vers. Literally, *For taking hold of,* &c. Dan. ix. 24, לְכַלֵּא הַפֶּשַׁע, “*to finish transgression,*” i. e. *for closing up,* &c. וּלְכַפֵּר עוֹן, *and for making reconciliation,* &c. Ps. lxxiii. 4, לְמוֹתָם, lit. *for their dying.* Jud. v. 18, לְמוֹת, *for dying, or death;* and so of the rest: in no one of which is the sense of *usque dum*, until, necessary. In most of them, indeed, *in order to*, may be supplied without violence to the context; but not so in Is. vii. 15, because the child’s eating butter and honey can have no possible connection with his acquiring knowledge, nor can the passage be so explained; unless, indeed, the particle לְ may be taken in the sense of *until*; but for this no good example can be cited from the whole Bible.

the character of all others, who are perfectly passive at this age. But, how the eating of “butter and honey” shall give him knowledge to choose the evil, and to refuse the good, it is quite out of my power, and I believe of that of any other man, to say. I suppose the prophet means, that when a very child, his extraordinary character shall appear; and this the Evangelist assures us was the fact. See Luke, ii. 46. All this then, I think, naturally and properly refers to our Lord, just as St. Matthew has cited it.

Let us now come to ver. 16. Here we are told that, “before the child (הַנֶּעֱר) shall know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good, the land . . . shall be forsaken of both her kings.” I think it must be evident, that the child Immanuel cannot be meant here; because we are assured, in the preceding verse, that he shall, even as a child, know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good: besides, the fulfilment of the prediction respecting him, was too remote to admit of comparison with the fates of these kings. This last consideration has been felt and acknowledged by every writer, I believe, who has touched upon the subject. At the 3rd verse preceding, we are informed, that Isaiah was to take his own son Shear-jashub, and to go and meet Ahaz on this occasion. If, then, the child just alluded was not Immanuel, why may it not have been this son of the prophet? For my own part, I think it extremely probable that it was: and this view of the subject seems to be fully confirmed, by similar phraseology used with respect to another son of Isaiah in the 4th verse of the next chapter: “For before the child (הַנֶּעֱר, *this* child, according to Noldius) shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, &c.” Such language could not, after what has been said, properly apply to Immanuel, but will be suitable enough to Isaiah’s son; and this will perhaps be sufficient to account for the circumstance of his having been taken to meet Ahaz. Besides, the events predicted respecting these kings, must have taken place within the time thus limited, see 2 Kings, xv. 30; xvi. 9; which will perfectly satisfy the terms of this prediction. I am indebted to the suggestions of a friend for this last comment.

There does not appear, therefore, the least possible reason for ascribing a double sense to this prophecy. The

Evangelist has cited it in its just and proper signification: a mistaken view of it, as in the other cases adduced, is the only ground for such double interpretation.

Another instance of the necessity of a double interpretation is Isaiah, xi. 6, &c. "The first completion of this is said to have taken place under Hezekiah; the second and full completion under the Gospel. The latter part of the same chapter, after alluding beautifully to the Exodus, seems," it is said, "principally to refer to the future restoration of the Jews," &c. Now let us see how all this is founded. We know, from the best authority, that the second verse, which is explanatory of the first, refers to Christ; and there is not the least reason to suppose, that any other person is even hinted at, till we come to ver. 11. In this verse we are told, that the Lord shall, in that day, set his hand again the *second* time to recover the *remnant of his people*, which shall be left from Assyria, &c.....and he shall assemble the outcasts of Israel....from the four corners of the earth: and so on. Now, I say, if we suppose this to refer to the new dispensation, which I think we ought to do, the predictions just mentioned will be found to have received an ample fulfilment in the apostolic age. An ensign was then set up for the nations; and this was then done for the first and the last time; the dispersed of Judah, Ephraim, &c. were also assembled,* but not brought back to Palestine; which indeed the prediction does not say; but they formed the first and principal part of the Christian assemblies in every part of the world: and to these were the epistles of St. James and St. Peter primarily addressed. The conquests mentioned in ver. 14—16, cannot but be spiritual, as, indeed, the whole chapter must be. These victories, then, are the victories of the Church made in its earlier days; and they were such as perfectly to satisfy the prediction. In the next place, there does not appear to be any allusion

* Theodoret says on this passage: *πισπιστεύουσι δὲ ὅμως μυριάδες πολλαί, καὶ τρισχίλιοι καὶ πεντακισχίλιοι κατὰ ταυτὸν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυροῦνται, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς τοῦτος δὲ Ἰάκωβος τῷ Θεοπιστίῳ Παύλῳ πολλὰς τῶν Ἰουδαίων πεπιστευκότων ὑπὲρβησε μυριάδας... Ποῖον οὖν ἀρετὴ σημεῖον εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ σταυροῦ σύμβολον, δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ Ἰουδα πλανωμένους, πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐποδηγήσιν; καὶ ἀφαιρεθήσεται ὁ ζῆλος Εφραίμ, κ. τ. λ. (v. 13.) Ταῦτα πάσαι ἰγένετο τῆς βασιλείας διηρημένης· μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ Βαβυλῶνος ἐπάνοδον, τὴν παλαιὰν ἔσχον ὁμονοίαν. So Eusebius, *Demonst. Evang. lib. ii. cap. iv. § xli.* See also Micah, v. 2—9.*

whatever to the Exodus; the allusion is to the delivery from Babylon: for at that time, according to the later prophets, considerable numbers were to return from other places as well as from Babylon: the *second time*, therefore, of effecting such a liberation, must be the second in order from the Babylonian. In this view there is no necessity for a double interpretation; no intimation whatever of Hezekiah, nor any of a temporal restoration of the Jews.

Another such prophecy is thought to be Isaiah xl. Because, it is said, it *must* primarily relate to the delivery from Babylon; and to shew this, we have considerable talent, poetical imagery, and some fine writing, displayed. I doubt, nevertheless, whether the whole of this is not a mere delusion.* The New Testament is quite sufficient to shew, that it applies to the times of Christ. Some passages which it contains seem also to shew, that it never could have applied to the temporal Jerusalem. *E. g.* ver. 5, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and ALL flesh shall see it TOGETHER." So in ver. 4, "EVERY valley shall be exalted, and EVERY mountain and hill shall be made low; and THE CROOKED (generally) shall be made straight," &c. So the concluding verse: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" and so on. Nor does the whole chapter contain one syllable which limits it to Palestine, nor one word about a temporal restoration of the Jews. The Apostolic interpretation, therefore, is the just one; and every other ought to be rejected as worthless and mischievous.

One instance more, of this sort, and I have done. Hosea, xi. 1: "*Out of Egypt have I called my son.*" The *primary* meaning is, it is said, the delivery of the Israelites from Egypt; the *secondary*, the calling of the infant Christ out of that country: and of this, it is added, there can be no doubt. I must, nevertheless, be allowed to doubt, because I believe the position to be extremely doubtful. In the first place, I can see no reason for supposing, that the passage alludes

* There is no objection, let it be remembered, here offered to the supposition, that the Prophet, having in his mind the delivery and return from Babylon, might not thence have taken occasion the more forcibly to depict the times and character of a deliverance infinitely more glorious. This sort of transition from temporal to spiritual times of prosperity is often had recourse to by the sacred writers.

to any call from Egypt. I would thus translate it: *For Israel (is but) a youth, yet I love him; and, from (the times of) Egypt, I have named (him) my son.* Then, in ver. 3, 4, notwithstanding the idolatry mentioned in ver. 2, instances of this love are cited. Now, I think, the Evangelist (Matt. ii. 15) has cited the passage in this sense. It is said, that the child was in Egypt until the death of Herod. It is added, “*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*” Thus the passage stands in our version; but, I ask, How can this apply to the context? It is only said here, that Christ remained so long in Egypt, that it might be fulfilled, &c.; and then the prophecy is cited. It is not said, that he left Egypt, and so the prediction was fulfilled: the account of his leaving Egypt is not entered upon till we come to the twentieth verse; and then we hear nothing of this prophecy. I prefer taking it, therefore, (Εξ Αιγύπτου, &c.) in the sense in which I have translated the passage from Hosea. *Since, or from (the times of) Egypt, I have named (Israel) my son.*

The meaning of both the Evangelist and Prophet seems to be this: As in Egypt Israel first received the title of son, (see Exod. iv. 22), and, as ever since that period he has been so named, I have continued as a father to love him, &c. In Egypt he first experienced my miraculous interference and protection; and now, the infant Saviour, his spiritual head and leader, and with reference to whom he held this title, has in like manner there been protected. From that time I have continued to act towards Israel as a father; and now, in conformity with the declaration of the Prophet, the same fatherly care has been extended to his 'last king of the house of David—i.e. this is the last and the completion of a series of merciful interpositions in favour of this adopted son; and, as the last Saviour was to complete and finish the work of redemption as shadowed out under the Theocracy, and who is therefore in a much higher sense my Son, I name and protect him as mine in the land of Egypt likewise.*

* I beg it to be understood, that whenever I cite any of the apocryphal or spurious scriptures in this work, this is not done for the purpose of ascribing any authority, either divine or critical, to them, but only to ascertain the opinions of those who used them. In the apocryphal gospel of our

But, whatever may be thought of this interpretation, certain it is that the Evangelist cites the passage as having then only been fulfilled; and this is sufficient for my purpose.

It will, perhaps, be unnecessary to follow this subject any farther, because I know of no instances more difficult to restrict to one sense than those already considered; and, if all others are also capable of being so restricted, which I believe to be the case, there can never be any necessity for having recourse to a double sense. I will readily grant, that we do occasionally find, in the same chapter of a prophet, particulars predicted which are to come to pass at different periods; and these too will sometimes be found in the very same discourse. The return from Babylon, for instance, will sometimes be followed by predictions of an infinitely more glowing description respecting the times of the Christian church; but in these cases we have nothing confused, nothing double-tongued. We shall always be able, by a little consideration, to separate the one prediction from the other, just as we can the several subjects which seem to have called forth many of the remarks of our Lord in the New Testament, from the subject matter of the remarks themselves. And, when we have done this, all will be simple, obvious, and easy.

The rule here urged, in favour of a single interpretation of prophecy, ought also to be extended to the historical accounts of the Scripture. It has been a practice, I know, and still is, to take the liberation from Egypt or Babylon, as typical of the Christian life, &c., while, in fact, they were events brought about solely for the furtherance of God's purposes, for the fulfilment of certain prophecies, or to prove and illustrate his dealings with his Church. To their application in this sense now, there certainly can be no objection, for so far the application will be just and scriptural; but, when these are cited, divided, subdivided, and particular doctrines elicited, just as if all this contained, under its primary meaning, another still more recondite and mystical, corresponding in all its parts with the more sublime declarations of the Gospel, I

Saviour's infancy, then, I find this text cited, not with reference to Christ's egress from Egypt, but to his being preserved there from the cruelty of Herod. It will not be too much, therefore, to suppose that, in the early times of the church, this view of the text may have generally prevailed.—*Jones on the Canon*, vol. ii. p. 177.

must object ; and insist, that whatever else this may be, it is not a just interpretation of the Scriptures, but is an adaptation of its declarations to circumstances which do not appear ever to have entered the minds of the sacred writers ; and to build up the Christian Church upon matter which may just as conveniently be extracted from the histories of Livy, Tacitus, or Thucydides ; and, eventually, to bring into disrepute, that which it was intended to elevate to an unusual height of glory and admiration. From particular prophecy, therefore, and plain history, let the obvious intention of their authors be first sought and ascertained : when this is done, the preacher ought to apply them just as the sacred writers have done, for the purpose of magnifying the holiness, goodness, severity, or mercy of God ; and this for the purpose of strengthening the faith of his hearers, or of deterring them from sin : but not to enable them the more readily to discover mysteries in divinity, or to spiritualise all they may find in God's word. This will be to add to it, and extensively to ruin its authority and influence.

In the next place, that kind of prophecy which we have termed *general*, will admit of repeated application ; but still, this ought always to be made in the sense primarily intended by its authors. This sort of prophecy necessarily consists in commands, prohibitions, promises, threats, exhortations, and warnings ; and, as these must, in a book coming from God, necessarily extend not only to the conduct but to the heart, they must always be interpreted in a manner suitable to their character. If it is said, "*thou shalt not kill*," we must understand, not only that the act is forbidden, but every thing which may in any degree lead to it ; just as St. John has interpreted it, "*he that hateth his brother is a murderer*." For this comprehensive view of this kind of context, two reasons may be assigned : one is, God, who is the judge, sees the heart ; the other, If this extended interpretation be not admitted, then must we have had a revelation containing a law for every particular case both of practice and of conscience that could possibly occur : which would have been impracticable, at the least. The whole tenour of Scripture, however, assures us, that this is the character of the moral law ; and, when we are apprised of this, every doubt on the subject must vanish.

DISSERTATION II.

PART II.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It is not my intention here to enter on the verbal criticism of every part of this interesting portion of holy Scripture; this I hope to do hereafter, should opportunity be afforded: my object now is, to endeavour to ascertain its general scope and bearing, and nothing more.

I pass over all inquiries, therefore, respecting the author of this prophecy, taking for granted that he was inspired, and that he lived some time before the destruction of Jerusalem.* This last opinion I ground upon the circumstance, that no mention of this event as a fact is found in this book: and, for my own part, I believe that the author was St. John. I omit these inquiries, because the limits prescribed to this work will not allow of their being introduced. Let us then, in the first place, transport ourselves as much as possible into the times in which this book first appeared, consider the state and expectations of the Christian church at that period; and proceed to consider, in the next place, whether these, taken in connection with the general context of the prophecy, will afford us any clew to the object and intention of the writer.

* This book was, according to Arethas, written at Ephesus sometime after John had left Jerusalem, and before the war against the Jews had commenced. This he mentions as a report in his days. Com. in Rev. cap. vii. 4—8. And Victorinus, on chap. iv. 14, says: “*Nam Evangelium postea scripsit. Cum essent Valentinus et Cherinthus et Ebion et cæteri scholæ Sathanæ diffusi per orbem, convenerunt ad illum de finitimis provinciis omnes, et compulerunt ut ipse testimonium conscriberet.*” According to this, the Apocalypse was written before John’s Gospel.

We know, from the combined and clearest declarations of prophecy, that, prior to the time of our Lord's appearance, he was to be expected; and that certain remarkable events were to follow his ministry and sufferings. To these declarations our Lord himself frequently alluded: after his death and resurrection, they were again and again insisted upon by the Apostles. We shall now cite a few of them. We have already seen, from the book of Daniel, that a succession of empires was to follow that of Persia, and that these were to end with the Roman. We have also noticed *the abomination of desolation*, as mentioned in these prophecies, and applied by our Lord to the times immediately succeeding his death; and we have adverted to the more particular detail of these events, as related in the latter part of the 9th chapter of the book of Daniel. It has likewise been observed, that predictions are to be found in other places, as alluded to by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans and elsewhere, predicting both the conversion of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. These, I think, are intimations of which no doubt whatever, as to their real scope, can be entertained. Let us now turn to the predictions of our Lord, relating to the times and circumstances which should precede these events; and, for the sake of brevity, we shall notice only the most remarkable. Matt. xxiv. 2: "Verily I say unto you, *There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* Ib. 3. Tell us, when shall these things be? *and what* (shall be) *the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* (τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, of the completion of the period, or dispensation*). 4. Take heed that no man deceive you: for

* The context here makes it quite impossible that the end of the world generally can be meant, unless we suppose it was to end with that generation, which is absurd: *συντελεία*, therefore, in this place, must mean consummation, rather than end. In Mark, xiv. 62, this prediction is again made, in reply to a question put by the high priest on the mock trial of our Lord: "*Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" The passage is a citation from Daniel, vii. 13; and the high priest most likely considered it as such, and hence pronounced the use here made of it blasphemous, and decisive as to the high assumptions of Christ. That this prophecy of Daniel alludes to the event also predicted by our Lord, it is scarcely possible to doubt. That coming in the clouds signifies, in symbolical language, the coming with armies and multitudes, may be seen in Jer. iv. 13. Is. lx. 8. And the same is clear, from the

many shall come in my name, &c. 6. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled : for all (these things) must come to pass, *but the end is not yet.* 9. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, &c.* 10. *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.* 11. *And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.* 12. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ; and THEN SHALL THE END COME.** 15. *When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ;* 16. *Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.* 21. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, &c.* 25. Behold, I have told you before. 27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 30. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, *and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* 31. *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet ; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. . . .* 34. *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.†* 42. *Watch therefore ; for ye*

mention of the armies occurring in the prophecy of our Lord.—Some infidel writers, ignorant of what could be meant by this kind of language, have not hesitated to pronounce the Apostles, and others who have used it, as infected with superstition. See the Bishop of Lincoln's valuable work on Tertullian, p. 364.

* "It is necessary, that searching diligently into those things which are *near to come to pass*, we should write to you. . . . For the consummation of sin is come, as it is written. . . . 'There shall ten kings reign,' &c. (Dan. vii.) . . . 'And I saw the fourth beast,' " &c. Catholic Epist. of Barnabas. Archb. Wake's edit. p. 163. See also p. 165.

† At ver. 32 : "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree : When its branch is yet tender, &c. . . . ye know that summer is nigh : so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near," &c. Then, at the next verse : "This generation shall not pass till all these things (πάντα ταῦτα GENHTAI, *i. e.* the inceptive signs) BE ;" not, as in the authorised version, *be fulfilled* : this gives an erroneous view of the subject.

know not what hour your Lord doth come." This prophecy is also found in Mark xiii. and again in Luke xxi., where we find a few additional circumstances, which I shall now cite. Ver. 22. "For these be the days of vengeance, that *all things which are written may be fulfilled.* 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled 28. And when these things BEGIN to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. 31. *So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.* 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*"*

That a great part of this prophecy had been the subject of previous prediction, there can be no doubt; and, from the solemnity and terrors with which it is here enounced, coupled also with exhortations to watchfulness, and with warnings against disregard and worldly-mindedness in the disciples, I think it must be equally certain, that the infant church could not but have been continually in expectation of this period,—of Christ's coming to execute vengeance on his enemies,—and of the final triumph of the kingdom of God, or, which is the same thing, of the true Christian Church. If this be the case then, and if it was also expected that false teachers should arise (which is likewise a part of this prophecy), it is extremely likely that we should find several notices of this expectation, &c. in the writings of the Apostles to the several Churches. Nothing, I think, can be more probable; and nothing, perhaps, is more certain, than that we do find such notices. The first intimation of this kind is in the Acts of the Apostles, i. 11: "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,*" i. e. He shall come again,

* A brief notice of these predictions is given in John, xv. 18—21; xvi. 1—4, 20; xxi. 18. See also Zech. xiii. with Theodoret's Commentary, particularly on ver. 9; also, *ib.* xiv. 1, 2, where Theodoret tells us, that a report prevailed in his day, stating that when Vespasian and Titus were preparing for their attack upon Jerusalem, the Christians left the city by revelation, which he applies to explain the latter part of the second verse.

according to his own prediction and that of the prophet Daniel, *in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory*.* Allusion is again made, chap. ii. ver. 16—21, to the subject matter of our Lord's prediction, as also found in the book of Joel; and it is there cited as having received part, at least, of its fulfilment. Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God is also mentioned at ver. 33, where it is shewn, that this (as predicted in the 16th Psalm) could not possibly apply to the temporal David. And the consequence was, about three thousand persons (Jews) received the faith of Christ. In this case the Apostle certainly had the prediction of our Lord in view: a part of it,—the power to be given from above, whereby they should refute their adversaries,—had now been fulfilled; and this must have been matter of the greatest astonishment to them, as well as of confirmation to their faith. Again, chap. iii. 21, it is said: "Whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restitution of all things*,† which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." We have seen, in our Lord's prediction (Matt. xxiv. 14), that the Gospel was first to be preached in all the world; and, when this had been done, the end was to come. Then, at ver. 30, we are told, in its just order: "*Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven*," &c. And in Luke, xxi. 22: "*These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled*." This coming of our Lord, therefore, was not to be expected until the gospel of the kingdom had been so published: and his coming then, was to destroy both the Jewish polity and the heathen powers, and to establish his kingdom among the Gentiles. To this great restitution of primitive and universal worship, I think, Peter here refers; which is no more than our Lord himself had mentioned to the Samaritan woman.‡ To this

* Theodoret, on Zech. xiv. 4, tells us, that his *standing on Mount Olivet* alludes to his standing there at his coming to avenge himself on Jerusalem, that being the place from which he ascended to heaven: *Οθεν γὰρ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀναλήφθην, ἐκεῖθεν δίδωσι τοῖς κατ' Ἰουδαίων στρατευομένοις τὴν νίκην.*

† That is, in which the world shall, by the preaching of the Gospel, which had been the constant subject of prophecy, again be restored to the means of grace and the hope of glory.

‡ John, iv. 20, 21.

consummation or restitution, St. Peter also alludes in v. 25 : “ *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ;*” which has been more than once cited by St. Paul in the same sense. St. Peter adds : “ *Unto you FIRST, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*” This is the order every where observed : the Jew has the first offer, but he generally refuses to accept it ; the Gentile has the second, and he receives it. The Gospel is accordingly preached in all the world ; and our Lord, by an exertion of his almighty power, first destroys the commonwealth of the Jews, then that of the opposing heathen, and permanently establishes his own Church. In Acts, iv. we find, that the persecution foretold by our Lord has commenced. In chap. v. 18, the Apostles are accordingly put into the common prison. At ver. 33, the council consult about slaying them. At ver. 36, 37, Gamaliel tells us of two false Christs ; and at ver. 40, the apostles *are beaten*, charged to preach no more, and dismissed. This persecution is altogether Jewish. In chap. vi. 7, a great number of the priests believe ; after which follows the account of Stephen’s martyrdom. (“ Some of you shall they cause to be put to death,” &c. Luke, xxi. 16). Stephen must, in these circumstances, have had in mind our Lord’s prediction. The false teachers, the commencement of the persecution, and his own condemnation to be stoned, must, I say, have brought Christ’s words to his recollection : and (chap. vii. 56), in order to confirm the new believers, a vision of Christ in glory is afforded him : “ *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,*” are his words on this remarkable occasion.

In the next chapter (viii.) the persecution is renewed, in the commission received by Saul. At ver. 9, 10, we have an account of the sorceries of Simon, and of his joining the disciples. After this, he sets up for a false teacher : and, according to the reports of antiquity, he was the leader of the heretics. It will be unnecessary to follow this question farther in the Acts : there can be no doubt, I think, that the prediction of our Lord must have had a very great influence on the minds of the Apostles ; and, from them, on the minds of all the new converts. These persecutions could not but

have called forth the assurances of deliverance which our Lord had given to his Disciples; and this, we now shall endeavour to shew, from the epistles, was the fact.

If we carefully consider the drift of the first part of the Epistle to the Romans, we shall find that its great object is, to offer salvation first to the Jew, and secondly to the Gentile (chap. i. 16, 17). We next have the apostasy of the Gentiles dwelt on (*ib.* 18, chap. ii. 9); and then an offer of restitution made (*ib.* ver. 10, 11). The subject next taken up is, the apostasy of the Jews (*ib.* ver. 17—29). And generally, the conversion of the Jew is first sought, and then the restitution of the Gentile: both are followed up on one and the same ground, viz., faith in the person and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. This then is, so far, in strict accordance with our Lord's prediction: it is a part, and an important part, of that preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, which he had declared should take place, before his *sign* should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

In 1 Cor. i. 7, the believers are said to come behind in no gift, "*waiting*," it is added, "*for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also CONFIRM you unto the end, that ye may be blameless IN THE DAY of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" So says our Lord, "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.*" (Luke, xxi. 36.) Again, chap. iv. 5, "*Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come,*" &c. And again, ver. 9—13, "*For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death,*" and so on.

In 1 Thess. v. 1—4, we have a marked allusion to the period mentioned in our Lord's prediction: "*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye need not that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*" (See Matt. xxiv. 42—44; Luke xii. 37—40; xxi. 34—36.) "*For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*" (See Luke, xvii. 23—31.) "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,*" &c.: *i. e.* You have been warned of the approach of this period, therefore "*Watch,*" &c. (ver. 6). "*For* (ver. 9) *God hath not appointed us to wrath* (as he has

these rebels), *but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*" &c. I think it cannot possibly be doubted, that this passage alludes to the times predicted by our Lord; and if so, the thing appointed to destruction or salvation cannot be taken in any absolute or metaphysical sense, but in consideration of predictions already made; and these, in this case, were conditional: that is, they had particular respect either to faith or the contrary.

The next epistle (the second to the Thessalonians) has, unless I am greatly mistaken, a pointed reference throughout to these times, as already noticed (p. 237). Chap. i. 4: "*We . . . glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your PERSECUTIONS and TRIBULATIONS that ye endure, (which is) a manifest token . . . that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom for which ye also suffer (Luke, xxi. 31); seeing (it is) a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus SHALL BE REVEALED FROM HEAVEN WITH HIS MIGHTY ANGELS, in flaming fire,*" &c. (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, &c.)

The first verses of the second chapter have already been noticed (p. 237). We shall now simply remark, that the Apostle impresses on the Thessalonians, that the *time* of the *end*, or the *predicted vengeance*, is not yet come; but that, as the mystery of iniquity is in progress, it is not very far off. "*Therefore,*" adds he, ver. 15, "*brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught,*" &c. Whence it should seem that some particulars relating to this crisis had really been communicated to the churches; which, considering the great peculiarity of their circumstances, is extremely probable.

In 1 Tim. i. 4, allusion is made to the false teachers, some of whom have been already noticed. At chap. iv. this subject is again taken up, and the character of some of the false doctrines is specified. They speak lies, it is said, in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared; *i.e.* they propose their lies as being the truth of God, while their systems are such as to destroy all conscience both of right and wrong. Such, indeed, was the Gnostic heresy generally: they forbade to marry and to eat certain meats. This did the Encratitæ and other heretics; and, like the Pythagoreans, and Hindus of

this day, they also forbade the eating of animal food. These pretenders are again adverted to in chap. vi. 3—5; and the coming of our Lord to judgment in ver. 14, 15.

In the second Epistle, chap. ii. 11—17, we have the warfare of the believers, their reigning with Christ, and two false teachers, noticed. At chap. iii. 1—9, this subject is formally entered into, and the overthrow of the opponents stated. At ver. 6, they are identified with the false teachers already mentioned; and, from ver. 1 to 5, their characters, as foretold both by our Lord and Daniel, are fully given. These times are again alluded to in chap. iv. 3, 4; and hence occasion is taken to urge Timothy to the greater faithfulness and perseverance.

In Heb. x. 36, 37, we have also a manifest allusion to these times. “*For,*” it is said, “*yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*” And again, in chap. xii. 26, 27: “*Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*”

In 1 Peter, i. 5—7, we have an allusion to the persecutions and to their happy termination, as foretold by our Lord. So again at ver. 13; again, in chap. ii. 7—10; and again, in chap. iv. 7—17; and watchfulness is accordingly recommended. See also 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. At ver. 10, we have the abominable practices of these times, as foretold by Daniel and our Lord and mentioned by Paul; and again at ver. 12, their predetermined, *i. e.* predicted, destruction. From the latter part of the chapter we learn, that many of these had once held the truth (“*their love had waxed cold*”). In chap. iii. this subject is resumed; and we are told at ver. 10, that “*the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.*” The heavens (*i. e.* the old hierarchy, &c.) shall pass away: hence, at ver. 11, the Christians are exhorted to be holy; and at ver. 12, to look for and haste unto *the day of God*, *i. e.* of his vengeance on their enemies. Then, ver. 13, 14, the believers are, as before, encouraged with the promise of the *new heaven and earth* (as given by Isaiah, lxxv. 17), and exhorted accordingly to be diligent, that they may be found blameless, *i. e.* worthy to stand before the Son of man; and ver. 17, 18, conclude the Epistle in the same manner.

The following notices of these times and circumstances

are to be found in the Epistles of St. John :—1 Ep. chap. ii. ver. 18—20 : “ *Little children, IT IS THE LAST TIME ; and as ye have heard that ANTICHRIST shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the LAST TIME. They went out from us,*” &c. “ *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*” So also ver. 22 and 28 ; and chap. iii. 13. At chap. iv. 1, we have it stated, that *many false prophets are gone out into the world.* Again, 2 Ep. ver. 7, 8, “ *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves,*” &c. See also ver. 10, 11 ; again 3 Ep. i. 9, 10. Again, Jude, v. 4, “ *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,*” &c. ; i. e. as on other occasions, their overthrow had been made the subject of prophecy. See also ver. 8—15, where a very early prophecy of these rebels is noticed. At ver. 17—19 the Apostles’ warnings on this subject are expressly referred to : “ *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; how they told you there should be mockers in THE LAST TIME, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These BE THEY WHO SEPARATE themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*” Then at ver. 20, 21, we have the exhortations usually given when treating on this subject : “ *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God,*” &c.

These notices, to which indeed many others less direct might be added, are, I think, just what we might have expected to find under circumstances such as those were in which the Apostles were placed. The persecutions of their enemies, the Jews in particular, they must have severely felt. The false teachers, many of whom had left their own society, must have greatly harassed and perplexed them. But they had received the amplest intimations from their Lord, that all this was to come to pass ; they had too been exhorted in patience to possess their souls, because he himself would soon come in power—would destroy their enemies—and give them the kingdom—and that all this should begin to come to pass, at least, in that very generation. This coming of the Lord, then, must have been a constant source of conso-

lation to the Christians. It was perhaps scarcely possible that a day, or even an hour, should pass, without some reference being made to it; and so familiar and popular (if I may use the term) was this consideration, that we find it taken up even by the false teachers themselves (2 Thess. ii.), as already remarked, and corrected by St. Paul himself, not indeed denying the truth of the doctrine, but only the time of its application.*

One remark more shall suffice on this subject. From these frequent notices of the promised coming of Christ, we may conclude, I think, that the expected event had not yet taken place; and, from the time limited by our Lord himself, as well as the Prophets, for its occurrence, no less than from the beginning of the mystery of iniquity mentioned by St. Paul, it must have been certain that it could not be far distant. Besides, from the progress made in the publication of the Gospel in all nations, no less than the constant allusions of the Apostles to those *times* as being the *last*, the believers must have been in almost daily expectation of its occurrence. They had indeed some marks given, by which they were to know for certain when it should have commenced: these were, *wars and rumours of wars; the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place; and the revelation of the man of sin*. These, however, as far as we can learn from the Acts and Epistles, had not yet made their appearance; but, as all was evidently in progress, and had proceeded far towards its completion, the END could not be far off. That the subject here mentioned must have been one of the greatest interest to the believers in the earlier days of Christianity, I think, there can be no possible doubt, not merely on account of their own personal safety and triumph, but because *the kingdom of God* was thus to be established throughout the world; the glory of God was to be revealed, and *all flesh* was to see it; the great theme of prophecy, the inestimable object of faith from the very beginning, was now about to receive its accomplishment, and the ways of God to be vindicated to every intelligent creature. Hence they were assured, that their labour was not in vain in the Lord; that the *more sure word of*

* Several remains of the doctrines thus taught are still to be found in the fragments of the apocryphal Scriptures, circulated by the false teachers of these times. See Jones on the Canon, *passim*.

prophecy should be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle, and that the mountain of the Lord's house should be made the point of confluence for the innumerable forces of the Gentiles.

Let us now suppose, what was only the fact, that as the *time of the end* drew near, the persecutions and trials of the Christians would become more and more terrible; that not only the Jew with his hierarchy, but even the Roman powers, would join in the tragedy; that the betraying of brother and brother, father and son, and the like, would be still more frequent and more fatal; that the false teachers would multiply and increase in power; and, in short, that iniquity would more and more abound. Under such circumstances, it would, perhaps, seem necessary, that some further instruction and encouragement should be afforded to the Church, yet only in its infancy, and harassed in a manner never before witnessed by any human society.*

* That great use was made of the book of the Revelation, for the purpose of encouraging and consoling the Christians, as well as for marking the signs of the times during the persecutions, may be gathered from most of the early writers of the Church. A great part of the Shepherd of Hermas is manifestly written in imitation of it; see particularly Visions iii. iv. and Similitude ix., Archbishop Wake's edition (ed. 2), pp. 209, 225, 305. In the Catholic epistle of Barnabas, ib. p. 160, we have, "*Seeing then the days are exceeding evil, and the adversary has got the power of this present world (age), we ought to give the more diligence to inquire into the righteous judgments of the Lord. Now the assistants of our faith are fear and patience; our fellow-combatants, long-suffering and continence.*" The general persecutions had now evidently commenced; and the revealing of the man of sin, according to St. Paul, or the loosing of Satan, according to the Apocalypse, is apparently alluded to. Before this time, too, the Apostles had other powers besides those here mentioned, namely, miraculous ones, enabling them to resist Satan. I conclude from this, that the author of this epistle lived after the times of the Apostles, and was not the Barnabas who accompanied Paul. See also p. 163, where Dan. vii. 7, &c. is cited, and applied to these times. At p. 187, we are told, that Christ shall come and abolish the season of the *wicked one*, and then the glorious rest of the seventh day (or millennium) shall commence. At p. 194, "*The Lord is near, and his reward is with him,*" is probably cited from Rev. xxii. 12. The heretics, moreover, appear to have made the greatest use of the Revelation, and hence to have taken their earthly paradise, millennium, &c. To meet these were the admirable remarks of Irenæus written on this sublime portion of Scripture, all of which apply to these primitive times. See Irenæus contra Hæreses, lib. iv. cap. xxv. xxvi. xxviii. xxix. xxx. xxxii. xxxiii. &c. But on these last chapters, we shall have something to offer in another place. See also Lactantius de Vita Beata, *passim*.

We may further suppose, I think, what is equally probable, that the copies of the Scriptures, the almost only source of consolation to the Christians under these circumstances, must have been extremely scarce. This was a poor and persecuted body; they had but little literature, little leisure, and less wealth, to supply these valuable sources of comfort and assurance. Besides, the whole volume of inspiration was bulky. Many of the Epistles, perhaps, and some of the Gospels, might not yet have reached all the churches; and if they had, the labour of collecting all the passages wanted for daily use must have been unsuitable to their state. But even Scripture itself seems to have wanted some epitome, which should connect its predictions with their final fulfilment, with regard to the new dispensation, and thus to present an entire whole to the reader of those, and future, times. Such a work as the book of the Revelation, therefore, seems not only to have been wanted for the churches of those times, but also for those of every future period: a work in which the believer could view the whole counsel of God completed, and himself made a member of that household whose foundations had been laid by God himself from the very beginning. If, then, we can shew that this was the primary and main object for which this book was written, and that its context will amply bear out this view of it, we shall have reason, I trust, to believe that our labour has not been in vain; and this, I think, with God's assistance, we can do.

Another consideration which ought not to be omitted in this question, is the following:—Supposing the Christians to have been thus situated, in What kind of language ought such a book to be couched, in order to insure the end had in view? Would it have been desirable that it should state, in plain and good set terms, that, however the believers in Jesus might then be persecuted and tormented by the Jews, or the Romans, or the false teachers, or by a combination of them all together, still, in a very few years, Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, the false teachers perish generally with it, the power of the Roman empire itself cease, and that the Christian Church should so prevail as to be established throughout the world. Suppose, I say, for a moment, such a book to be found in

the hands of this suspected, persecuted, and hated body, what must have been the consequence? *

Would not the document have been carried to the governors, and perhaps even to Rome itself, and cited against them as treasonable? Would it not naturally have been inferred that they were a political society, associated purely for worldly purposes? And would not the false teachers have been among the first to give information of the existence of such a document? I must confess, I think it extremely probable that, in such a case, all this would have come to pass. And if so, it will be extremely difficult to say what apologies could have been offered in mitigation of judgment. For now, it would have been argued that, whatever sense the Christians themselves put upon such a work, it was evident enough to the world, that it was to all intents and purposes political; that its object was solely to raise the importance of one party at the expense of another, and, under the plea of religion, to obtain nothing but temporary results.† But this is not all. Upon the circulation of such a work among the Christians, who had become a numerous body, very large numbers disaffected to the existing government (and of this sort many are always to be found in every country), might have been tempted to join them; and who does not see what mischief, both to Christianity and to the state itself, might have hence accrued? If, however, such document was couched in the language, and under the symbols, peculiar to the ancient Scriptures, and understood by expe-

* See an occurrence of this kind mentioned in Amos, vii. 10—13.

† I cannot forbear noticing here a passage in Lactantius, to shew how very anxious the Romans were to find out occasions of complaint against the Christians, and how very likely it is that, had not this book in particular been couched in symbolical language, it would have been brought forward as matter of accusation against them. In the book de Vita Beata, lib. vii. cap. xxvi. after talking rather wildly about the millennium, Lactantius says: “Hæc est doctrina sanctorum prophetarum, quam Christiani sequimur: hæc nostra sapientia....quia nos defendere hanc publice atque adserere non solemus, Deo iubente, ut quieti ac silentes *arcanum* ejus in abdito atque intra nostram conscientiam teneamus, nec adversus istos vere profanos, qui non discendi, sed arguendi atque illudendi gratia, inclementer Deum ac religionem ejus impugnant, pertinaci contentione certemus. Abscondi enim tegique mysterium fidelissime oportet, maxime a nobis, qui nomen fidei gerimus. *Perum illi hanc taciturnitatem nostram veluti malam conscientiam, criminantur;*” &c. And in another place, cap. xv.: “Romanum nomen, quo nunc regitur orbis

rienced believers only, we have a reason why such a work would never call forth the suspicions of the Romans, afford matter of accusation for the false teachers, or be seized upon by the disaffected for the purpose of furthering their own wicked designs. Under such circumstances, no disaffection to the Roman state would be spread by the Christians, either among themselves, or among others who might have wished to join them, as far as political enterprises went; because they looked for nothing more than *a spiritual kingdom*, although they very well knew, that the existing temporal ones should be destroyed; still, as theirs was to be *purely spiritual*, no *worldly* advantage could accrue to them in the proposed change; for a warfare would yet remain to be sustained, unless indeed the very character of Christianity itself, as it had been taught by its divine Founder and his disciples, was also to undergo a change. But of this they had heard nothing. In the mean time, however, they did, as their Lord had commanded them, persevere in calling first the Jew and secondly the Gentile to the faith of the new dispensation; and so far, which was indeed all they could do, they endeavoured by every means to save some.

These considerations will, I think, afford a reason why the Apocalypse should be written at this period, and why it was couched in symbolical rather than plain language* generally. And perhaps the prophecies committed to writing in Babylon by Ezekiel and Daniel, employed symbolical language generally, rather than that of a plainer and more

(horret animus dicere, sed dicam quia futurum est), tolletur de terra . . . et id futurum BREVI, conciones prophetarum denunciant sub ambage aliorum nominum, *ne facile quis intelligat*." And, at a much earlier period, Justin Martyr: Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀκούσαντες Βασιλείαν προσδοκῶντας ἡμᾶς, ἀκρίτως ἀνδρώπινον λέγειν ἡμᾶς ὑπαυλῆφατε, ἡμῶν τὸν μετὰ Θεοῦ λεγόντων.—Apol. p. 18. And after him, Hippolytus the Martyr: Εἰ γὰρ οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν μακάριοι προφῆται γεννημένοι, εἰδότες αὐτὰ οὐκ ἠδέλυσαν μετὰ παρρησίας κηρύττειν, ἵνα μὴ τάραχον ποιήσωσι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχαῖς, ἀλλὰ μυστικῶς διηγήσαντο. . . . πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν τολμῶντες τὰ ὑπ' ἐκείνων ἀποκρύφως εἰρημένα εἰς φανερόν λέγειν.—De Antichristo, par. xxix. Edit. Fabr.

* If Dionysius of Alexandria had duly considered this circumstance, and acquainted himself with the character of this kind of language, he would perhaps have not only seen, as indeed he did, that this book could not be understood by the simple declarations of its terms, but that it contained the words of instruction, consolation, and real inspiration. See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. cap. xxv.

obvious description, for similar reasons; and if so, all becomes reasonable and obvious. But why such a book should appear, couched in terms of this kind, after all the world had become Christian, for the mere purpose of marking out certain political events, I must confess it is out of my power to see. Nor can I, in that sense, discover the least possible connection it can have with the prophecies to which it appeals, most, or all, of which have been determined, in the New Testament, to refer to the apostolic, and immediately subsequent, times. But of this, more will be said when we come to particulars.

SECTION II.

VISION I.

THE OPENING OF THE REVELATION, WITH A GENERAL ADDRESS TO THE
SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

CHAP. I.

Verse 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, &c.** By the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, I understand an account, exhibition, &c., of that revelation which the Church then expected; and as mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 7; Gal. i. 12; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 13, &c.: and this seems to be confirmed by the following context: “to shew unto his servants things which must SHORTLY come to pass.” That the period limited by our Lord for the commencement of this catastrophe must

* I cannot help here noticing the manner in which Mr. Ewald, in common with the Rationalists (as they are termed) of his country, speaks of the authority of this book in the outset of his commentary. “*Ἀποκάλυψις . . . revelatio, &c. . . in N. T. non nisi de rebus divinis obvium, sensu objectivo doctrinam quancunque vel persuasionem denotat, quam quis non hominum institutioni debet (Gal. i. 12, ii. 2), sed sensui in sui ipsius animi penetralibus nato; quo se insigniter motos et elatos videntes veteres prophetae et doctores, grato animo a Deo sibi suggesta esse ejusmodi consilia persuasum sibi habebant,*” &c. A little lower down: “*Fingit enim Johannes, rerum futurarum, soli Deo notarum, imagines a Christo, cui a Deo patefactae sunt, per se interpretem Christianis monstrari.*” In the next page: “*Pertinet enim ad potestatem hujus generis paræneticarum fictionem, quo firmiorem miseris spem faciant,*” &c. And in the next: “*Johannes igitur hic simpliciter se assecutum strenuum, non doctorem doctrinae Christianae nominat,*” because, forsooth, he

have been drawing nigh, has already been shewn. See also similar expressions in ver. 3 following; chap. iv. 1; xxii. 6, 10, 12, 20; whence it must appear, as far, at least, as words can make it do so, that every mark which could be necessary to define the time for the fulfilment of this prophecy has been given;—but more on this subject in the sequel.

2. *Who bare record of the Word, &c.* Who wrote of the Word (or *λόγος*) expressly, John, i. 1; *of the testimony*, i. e. as given of Jesus, 1 John, v. 9—11, which no other Apostle except John did; *and of all things that he saw*, i. e. of the things stated in this book. By this I think is meant, that he who wrote of *the Word*, John, i. 1; of the testimony, 1 John, v. 9, &c.; also wrote what we find here stated as seen in visions,—in other words, that John is its writer.*

3. *Blessed is he that readeth, &c....for the time is at hand*, (comp. Rem. xiii. 11; James, v. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 7), i. e. happy shall those believers be, who, during the tribulations now coming on, shall hear and attend to the declarations of this book. Christ hath sent it in order to console his servants, and to assure them, that he will soon appear to their salvation. So far we have the title, intent, and author, of this book, in general. And, let it here be carefully observed, we have, in this short preface, nothing whatever symbolical; the language is that of *plain narrative only*; and, as such, ought literally to be interpreted. The time was no doubt, as all the writers of the New Testament and all the primitive fathers very justly held, now at hand; and the fact is, the declarations of this book were soon realised. I would here lay

is said to have borne testimony to the truth! So we have, in a very few words, most *logically* and most *rationaly* got rid of the authority of this book and of its writer! A little farther on, p. 89, when the word *spirit* is introduced, we are gravely told that the later Jews got all their notions of this kind from the philosophy of the Chaldeans and Persians. It did not occur, perhaps, to this very rational divine, to tell us also how this word happens to be found in the first chapter of Genesis. See also Gen. xxvi. 35, margin; xli. 8; xlv. 27; Num. xi. 17, 26, 29; xiv. 24; xxvii. 18, &c. This must suffice for the work of Mr. Ewald, Commentarius in Apocalypsin, &c. Lipsiæ, 1828, p. 89, &c.

* Had Dionysius of Alexandria been aware of this, he would not have complained that this book had nothing in common with the other writings of St. John. See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. cap. xxv., and Arethas on the passage.

down what I deem to be a very important rule of scriptural interpretation; namely, 1. *Always to take language not symbolical in its plain and natural acceptation*; and, on the contrary, 2. *To be careful not to press symbolical language into particulars, as if it were plain and purely verbal*. If then John here saw the things which were shortly to come to pass on earth, but delivered to him, and from him to the Church, in symbols, these symbols must, according to our rule, be interpreted as such. When, for example, John sees certain things done in heaven (chap. iv. 1, &c.), we are not immediately to conclude, as is often done, that this is intended to teach us what is going on there, but rather to instruct us, by these symbols, in something relating to our present state, and useful for us to know. On the other hand, when we have plain narration, such as that with which this book begins, we must be careful not to seek for any other sense more recondite, than the words in their literal acceptation will give.

The contents of the first three chapters of this book seem to be of a local character.

4—7. Contain John's address to the seven churches* of proconsular Asia, as commissioned by Christ, who is here styled *the faithful and true witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth*. He is called *Prince of the kings of the earth*, because the middle wall of partition having now been broken down, the kingdoms of this world had become his property, (see Ps. ii. 8, 9, &c.; Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Eph. i. 20—23, &c.) It is, therefore, contrary to the declarations of Scripture to affirm, as many do, that the kingdoms of this world have *not become* the kingdoms of Christ. They are his, nevertheless; and they are no less so, because men may be in a state of ignorance or of rebellion against him. In these cases his professed disciples are perhaps to blame.—Then, ver. 5, follows an ascription of praise: "*unto him that loved us,*" &c. To him who has given us such exceedingly great privileges and promises, who hath so loved us that he laid down his life for us, and who hath made us

* The old commentators generally understand here the *whole* Christian Church (see chap. ii. 23); just, says Primasius the bishop of Utica and disciple of Augustine, as Peter alone received the keys, but which *all the churches* had a right to use. See his valuable commentary on this book in Bib. Patrum, tom. i. p. 1356-7, ed. 1624.

kings and *priests* unto God, be ascribed, as is most due, glory and dominion for ever and ever: let it be our business to ascribe this evermore to Christ, to whose dominion we believe there shall be no end.

7. *Behold he cometh with clouds, &c.* The Evangelist represents this as then going on, in the present tense, just as the predictions are frequently made by the Hebrew prophets. See the remarks on Is. vii. 14, p. 274. This identifies the subject with the prophecy of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 30; Mark, xiii. 26; and as cited by our Lord at his trial, Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark, xiv. 62: comp. these with Daniel, vii. 13; Acts, i. ii.; 2 Thess. i. 7—10. Whence it must follow, beyond all doubt, that the period, here intended to be pointed out, must fall within the apostolic age; otherwise these interwoven and mutually confirmatory texts of Scripture, must stand for nothing.*

8. Our Lord's dignity, identified with that of Jehovah. Is. xli. 4. xlv. 6. xlviii. 12. See also v. 11, 17.†

9. John identifies himself with the Christians as a companion in tribulation, in the kingdom and patient waiting for Jesus, &c.; and, in this sense, the Revelation of Christ could not but have been with him matter of the greatest importance. Nor is it improbable, that John did in reality wait until Christ so came, commencing His visitations as it had been promised in John, xxi. 22, 23.

10. John's vision, 11—18. A symbolical description of our Lord, intended to impress the reader with the power he possessed as placed at the right hand of God, and made prince of the kingdoms of the earth. (See p. 225, &c.)

19. John is commanded to record the things he had seen, in order both to shew the believers that they should soon come to pass, and also to afford them consolation and support. This symbolical representation of our Lord has been already considered: see page 228.

* We have here in the Commentary of Arethas, with much other exceedingly valuable matter: *Νεφελῶν δὲ κἀνταῦθα λόγος, ὡς ἐν τῇ ἀπὸ γῆς αὐτοῦ πρὸς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάσσει...τῶν νεφελῶν ἐνταῦθα, εἴτε διὰ τὸ κοῦφον τὰς μεταρσίους καὶ ἀγγελικὰς δηλοῦντων δυνάμεις, κ. τ. λ.*

† So Arethas on this place.

CHAP. II.

Verse 1—5. An address to the Bishop of the church of Ephesus. The patience and labour evinced is generally commended; but the *love had waxed cold* (see Matt. xxiv. 12), and hence judgment had become due; and this it is threatened shall quickly take place.

6. The practices of one of the false teachers alluded to; and this, according to antiquity, was one of those, (*i. e.* Nicholas the deacon, Acts, vi. 5), who had been among the Apostles.

8, 9. A message to the Bishop of Smyrna. His patience in poverty and tribulation is praised. Jews are denominated the synagogue of Satan; they had been the murderers of Christ and of his servants, and their malice was still continued.*

10. He is exhorted to fear none of those things, which were only to try and purge them during a short space of time, Dan. xii. 10, (*ten days*, see a similar phrase, Gen. xxiv. 55). See the promise made in our Lord's prophecy in Matt. xxiv. 13; Mark, xiii. 13; which is perhaps originally given in Dan. xii. 12, and James, i. 12.

11. *He that overcometh, &c.* Such an one *shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.* John, v. 24; 1 John, iii. 14; Rom. viii. 1, &c.; Rev. xx. 6—14. xxi. 8.

12, 13. Address to the Bishop of Pergamos. Christ the author of it. An allusion to the persecutions, and mention of the martyrdom of a disciple, Antipas.†

14, 15. Accused of eating idolatrous sacrifices, and of fornication, the two great stumbling-blocks of those times.

16. *Repent, &c.* These addresses contain what we have termed *general prophecy*; they depend on certain conditions.

17. *To him that overcometh, &c., i. e.* who perseveres in the use of those weapons which are peculiarly adapted to this warfare. See Ephes. vi. 11—20: *Put on the whole armour, &c.*, which has a particular relation to these times

* Τῶν τῷ λόγῳ μὲν Ἰουδαίων, ἔργῳ δὲ συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ. Rom. ii. 28, 29. *Arctas* on the passage. So, according to Primasius, Jews generally.

† Αντίπας ὁ μάρτυς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐμαρτύρησεν, οὗ καὶ τὸ μαρτύριον εἰς ἕτι σώζεται, πολλὰ παρρησιασάμενος τοῖς ἐκβουλεύουσι, καὶ ὅσον εἰς αὐτὸν ἦκιν, ἄχρι θανάτου προύβη. —*Arctas* in loco.

of trial. *Will I give to eat of the hidden manna.* See John, vi. 32—35: *My Father giveth you the true bread (or manna, see ver. 31) from heaven.... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. — I will give him a white stone, i. e.* a sort of *carte blanche*, entitling him to ask for, and receive, whatever he may want.*

18—20. Address to the Bishop of Thyatira from Christ, containing a general commendation, but some reproofs in consequence of his allowing certain idolatrous practices, Gnostic in all probability.

21—23. Certain destruction denounced, unless repentance is entered on.

24, 25. The rest exhorted to watch, &c. till *the Lord come.* (Matt. xxiv. 42, &c.)

26—29. To him who overcometh, the promise is repeated that he *shall reign over the nations*, &c. See Matt. xix. 28, 29; Luke, xxii. 28—30; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3: comp. Dan. vii. 22, 27: all of which must refer to these times. *And he shall rule them*, &c. See Ps. ii. 8, 9, which delegates this power to Christ, and this He here delegates to his ministers. *I will give him the morning star.* See 2 Pet. i. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6, Christ's enlightening spirit.

CHAP. III.

Verse 1—3. Address and warnings to the Bishop of Sardis from Christ. Ver. 2, 3. Repentance urged; but if this be neglected, then Christ shall come *as a thief in the night*. See Matt. xxiv. 42—51, and the other parallel passages; most, if not all, of which relate solely to this period.

4—6. A few persons, however, are of a different character; these shall walk in white garments (are justified in God's sight); their name shall remain in the book of life; and Christ will confess them before his Father and the holy angels. See Matt. x. 32; Luke, xii. 8; which have particular reference to the trials and sufferings of these times.

7—13. Address and promises of Christ to the Bishop of

* So Primasius generally on this place. "Legis divinæ secreta," says Primasius here, "solius Christi potestate panduntur fidelibus, clauduntur incredulis," &c.—equally valuable and striking.

Philadelphia. Our Lord here speaks as the successor of David, using the words applied to Eliakim by Isaiah in chap. xxii. 20—24, of his prophecy.*—He is weak, yet has he kept Christ's word; hence, ver. 10, he shall be preserved from the temptation and trials which are shortly to come on all.† Ver. 11: Christ will SHORTLY come, therefore watch, pray, be steadfast. 12. He who shall thus persevere shall be made a pillar of the Church; he shall receive the name of God, and the name of the city of God, *the New Jerusalem*,‡ which, it has so long been promised, shall come down from heaven. Is. lxxv. 17: Nay, I will write upon him my *new name, Christian*.|| At ver. 9, we have a remarkable instance of the language used under the old dispensation, applied under the new: *I will make them*, it is said, *of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (generally), and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.* § This is taken from Isaiah, chap. xlix. 23, or lx. 14; and in either case it is addressed to *Zion*, which, according to our principles,¶ must apply to the Christian Church. The latter passage is perhaps the most specific; I shall therefore cite it: *The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.* That this chapter of Isaiah belongs exclusively from first to last to the

* According to Arethas, the key here signifies universal dominion, as mentioned in Matt. xxviii. 18; Luke, i. 32, 33.

† The persecutions under Domitian, or those under the Antichrist. *Arethas*.

‡ “*Novæ*,” says Primasius, “*propter novitatem vitæ in qua jubemur incedere.*”

|| Eusebius on Is. lxxv. 15, says, Τὸ δὴ οὖν ὄνομα καινὸν, ὃ μὴ παρὰ τοῖς παλαιαῖς ἔγνωστο, ποῖον ἂν εἴη, ἢ τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμεῶν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσωνυμίας, καὶ ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης εὐλογημένον Χριστιανῶν ὄνομα.—*Dem. Evang. lib. ii. cap. iv. § xlix.* So Arethas. “*Filii Dei per adoptionem dicimur.*”—*Primasius*.

§ Arethas here refers this their character to Satan himself, who had been a liar, and the father of lying (τοῦ ψεύδους πατήρ) from the beginning, alluding to John, viii. 47.

¶ See the note on Jer. xxx. 17, at p. 251.

times of the Christian dispensation, I am sure, it is impossible to doubt. In this sense it is here cited by our Lord, and so is it cited elsewhere in the New Testament. What Isaiah terms *Zion*, Christ here applies to the *new Jerusalem*; and, what is most remarkable, the persons styled by Isaiah the *enemies* of this state, our Lord declares are *Jews generally*.* Isaiah, too, says, they shall call this state, *The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel*. Our Lord speaks of a new city, and a new name. A new name this state indeed received; if, however, we apply the language of the Old Testament to it, we have then only a new adaptation of the old name, as the nature of the case indeed requires.

14—22. The address and admonition of Christ to the Bishop of Laodicea. Lukewarmth, indifference, was the principal error: a thing, which in more modern, and as it is

* In the Epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas, which we may cite as containing *the opinions of his times*, it is said of the Jews: "Those miserable men, being deceived, have put their trust in the house, and not in God himself who made them, as if it were the habitation of God. For, much after the same manner as the Gentiles, they consecrated him in the Temple; but learn, therefore, how the Lord speaketh." We have then Is. xl. 12. lxvi. 1. xlix. 17, cited. He adds: "Furthermore, it has been made manifest, how both the city, and the Temple, and the people of Israel, should be given up. For the Scripture saith: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the Lord will deliver up the sheep of his pasture, and their fold, and their tower, to destruction.* (Zeph. ii. 6.) And it *HAS COME TO PASS*," continues he, "as the Lord hath spoken." This father, I think, does not seem to have had the least idea, of any privilege reserved for the infidel Jew, nor any whatever of a restoration to Palestine. So also Ephrem Cyrus on Dan. ix. 27: "Quandoquidem exitus iste Judæorum haud quaquam similis futurus est eorumdem transmigrationi in Ægyptum, aut Babylonem; illinc enim dimissi fuere post annos quadringentos; et hinc post septuaginta dimittentur. Hæc autem vastitas Judicis Dei decreto statuta eadem *invariata manebit usque in ævum*." Tertullian argues to the same point in his tract adversus Marcionem, lib. iii. cap. xxiii. xxiv. In the tract de Pudicitia he allows, that the restitution of the Jews will be matter of exultation to the Christians; but this he probably meant in a spiritual sense. See also his tract adversus Judæos. Eusebius, in his Demonstratio Evangelica, says to this effect: ἐπὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσία, καὶ τῇ τῶν ἑθνῶν κλήσει, ἈΠΟΗΤΩΣΙΝ ΠΑΝΤΕΛΗ ΚΑΙ ἈΠΟΒΟΛΗΝ ΤΟΤ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ ΕΘΝΟΥΣ ΤΑ ΘΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΑΝΑΓΩΝΕΙ ΔΟΓΙΑ. Lib. ii. cap. i. See his very valuable proofs as given from the several prophets in the following context, and Theodoret on Zech. xi. 10, &c. to the end. Compare Amos, vi. 7—12; Ezek. vii. 2—27; and Amos, ix. 1—10. From ver. 11 to the end we have the prosperity of the remnant, or true Church, clearly foretold.

thought more enlightened, times, is believed to be a virtue, and is usually termed *liberality*. Success in acquiring earthly wealth seems to have been the next cause of failure in this pastor ; a circumstance which is, in these days, generally construed as the principal criterion of merit ! These things, however, according to our Lord, whose merits were never thus signalised, constituted nothing more than *wretchedness, poverty, blindness, and nakedness*, in the sight of God. The next and important counsel is, to seek the gold of Christ, which has been tried in the fire ; to press on after the *white raiment* (the justifying grace of God), which will cover the nakedness ; and to procure the eye-salve (the enlightening Spirit), which will enable a man to see the things belonging to his peace. In the next place, rebuke is no mark of the hatred of Christ ; but, on the contrary, of his love : and, on this ground, which is the most likely one to succeed in all such cases, zeal in the cause of truth, and earnest repentance, are recommended. And to urge this, this Bishop is with others assured, that Christ stands even at the door, and asks for admission on these terms. Then follow the promises of reward and exaltation as before, to all who succeed in this warfare. So far, I think, we have little more than general prophecy ; and, indeed, all the denunciations against Jerusalem were originally of this character : but, upon the stubbornness, unbelief, and continued sinfulness, of this people, these received their positive and immutable character. National transgression calls for positive national calamity ; and hence originated the positive and particular character of these predictions, with respect to the Churches. The calamity generally to fall on the Jews and Gentiles, had long ago received such immutable character. The Churches had partaken in their abominable practices ; and nothing but repentance could now save them from a general participation in their sufferings.

VISION II.

THE GENERAL SUFFERINGS, TRIALS, AND TRIUMPHS, OF THE CHURCH.

WE now come to a series of visions, the scope of which seems to refer to the first state, sufferings, and triumphs, of

the Christian church in general.* The first of these commences with chap. iv., and continues to the 18th verse of the eleventh, inclusive ; the particulars of which we now proceed to consider.

CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. *A door was opened in heaven.*† Ezek. i. 1 : *The heavens were opened.* So xi. 19 ; xv. 5 ; xix. 11, &c. ; intending to intimate that something remarkable is about to be revealed. *The first voice . . .* (was as) it were of a trumpet. So Exod. xix. 16, before the revelation made from Sinai.—*I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.* So chap. i. 19, which are said in the same chap. ver. 1—3, *shortly to come to pass*, and that *the time was at hand* : the same period is, therefore, marked out here. See the passages there cited.

2—11. *A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne,* &c. This description of the throne, &c. is taken from various parts of the Old Testament. See Exod. xxiv. 10. Is. vi. 1—3. Ezek. i. 26—28.‡ The four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white, and with crowns on their heads, seem to represent the heads of the twelve tribes, joined with those of the Christian church,|| namely, the twelve apostles justified

* The remark of Primasius on this place is valuable : “ *Postea, inquit, vidi. Post ipsam utique visionem se alteram memorat vidisse : non gestorum est diversum tempus, sed visionum : ac si quis unam rem diversis modis enarret,*” &c.

† *Cælum ecclesiam eo quod sit habitaculum Dei ubi cælestia geruntur.* —*Primasius.*

‡ According to Arethas, the precious stones are not here mentioned on account of their value, but on account of their colours ; as is also the rainbow. It is curious enough to remark that the deities of the Hindoos, the Persians, &c., as mentioned in the Dabistan, are generally painted, each with some particular colour ; which, like every thing of the sort, has, no doubt, been originally taken from the Bible.

|| So Victorinus Pictaviensis, the Bishop and Martyr, in his Commentary : “ *Sed et viginti quatuor, ut diximus, patres et apostolos judicare populum suum oportet.*” Matt. xix. 28, and Gen. xlix. 16, are then cited. And again, on ver. 8 of the next chapter : “ *Conjuncta Veteris Testamenti prædicatione cum novo, populum Christianum ostendit cantantem canticum novum.*” “ *Istæ comparationes,*” says Primasius, “ *ecclesiæ conveniunt quam Dominus indutus est.*” The four and twenty seats and elders he takes as just noticed.

and crowned in token of their faith and perseverance. The remainder of the chapter seems to mark out the majesty of Almighty God attended by his ministers, who are prepared to execute his purposes; and, before they receive the commission to do so, they ascribe praise to him as the Creator of all things. This chapter, therefore, is probably nothing more than an introduction, intended to arrest the attention of the reader, and to give authority to what follows. (See p. 225, &c.)

CHAP. V.

Verse 1. *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book, &c. . . . sealed with seven seals.**—Any book sealed, or otherwise difficult of explication, requires for its developement one who has knowledge sufficient to do this; especially where people are dull of sight or of understanding (Is. xxix. 9—12). In Daniel (xii. 4) we find the vision and the book sealed up to the TIME OF THE END; that is, to these times.† In Daniel, vii. 9—14, we also find the Ancient of days sitting, the books opened, every throne put down, and universal dominion given to the Son of man. In the present chapter, which appears to be a counterpart of that, the Ancient of days seems also to occupy the throne: the book, according to the declaration of Daniel, is sealed; and now, at, or near, the *time of the end*, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David,—that is, our blessed Lord,‡—is found worthy to take the book, and to unfold its mysteries; mysteries such as a people dull of sight and heavy of hearing could not understand. It will be unnecessary to dwell on the particulars, as the context applies this office to our Lord in express and clear terms. This is the more necessary to be borne in mind, because the revelation intended for the

* The Old Testament: *Victorinus*. “Utrumque Testamentum.”—*Primasius*.

† So Hippolytus the martyr on this passage. See also his Commentary on Daniel. Dan. sec. Septuag. p. 109.

‡ Arethas, too, here very properly refers us to Gen. lxix. 9. Is. xi. 1. “Quoties enim occisus Christus,” says Primasius, “in medio ecclesiæ prædicatur; toties idem agnus pro mundi crimine quasi immolari videtur.” On the 6th verse he says: “Super hanc, inquit, petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam, ac si diceret: *Super me ædificabo te*. Spiritus autem Domini replevit orbem terrarum.”

Churches generally, begins here. Let it also be borne in mind, that the whole of this chapter is symbolical (see on chap. i. 3); the matter therefore revealed in it ought not to be literally interpreted: and, as it manifestly relates to the Church on earth, the song, &c. mentioned ver. 8—14, ought not to be considered as taking place among the saints in heaven, but only among believers in the true church on earth. The mysteries of the invisible world seem never to have been made the subject of any distinct revelation: all we know is, that what we now see as through a glass darkly, we shall then see clearly, and contemplate face to face. See 1 Cor. xiii. 12; xv. 50—54. 1 Thess. iv. 14—18, &c.

CHAP. VI.

Verse 1. The Lamb opens the first seal; and, upon this, the ministering spirits cry out in a voice like thunder, “*Come and see!*”

2. One mounted on a white horse,* having a bow in his hand and a crown on his head, goes forth conquering and to conquer. The symbol of the white horse seems to be taken from Zech. vi. 3, where we have a prophecy treating in some of its parts on the building of the temple, in others manifestly on the coming and rule of Christ (ver. 12, 13). The imagery employed on that occasion cannot be unappropriate on this. Another passage referred to is, Ps. xlv. 3—5, where the arrows of this conqueror are mentioned as being fatal. This psalm evidently predicts the universal kingdom of Christ, and is occasionally cited as such in the New Testament. The commencement of the apostolic warfare is here symbolised.

3, 4. The second seal is opened; and, on this occasion, a person mounted on a red horse† goes forth. To this agent power is given to take peace from the earth, and to bring about mutual slaughter; his weapon is a great sword. This emblematical agent is taken from Zech. vi. 2, the verse pre-

* “*Equus albus, verbum est prædicationis, cum Spiritu Sancto misso in orbem.*” Victorinus, who then cites Matt. xxiv. 14. So Primasius. Σύμβολον, says Arcthas, τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ ἐναγγελισμοῦ, and cites Habb. iii. 15.

† Symbolical of the effusion of the blood of martyrs, according to this author. “*Bella sunt significata futura,*” says Victorinus, who then cites Matt. xxiv. 7.

ceding that just cited. The passage is evidently an application of Matt. x. 34, &c. which will therefore best explain it : "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law,*" &c. See also Luke, xii. 49—53 ; and Micah, vii. 6, from which the passage is primarily taken. It ought to be remarked, that the context in each of these places evidently alludes to these times of trial, and has, in some instances, been so cited and applied in the New Testament.

5, 6. The third seal is here opened ; and one mounted on a black horse (the symbol of sorrow and lamentation, Arethas), with a pair of balances in his hand, is seen.* Zech. vi. 2, is again cited for the symbolical agent. The balances seem to intimate that justice will be observed by these agents ; and when we are told that the oil and wine are not to be hurt, with the *extreme scarcity, pestilences, &c.* (Matt. xxiv. 7,) nevertheless intimated, we may infer, perhaps, that a *remnant* (Ezek. xiv. 22, 23) will be spared.

7, 8. The fourth seal is opened. One on a pale horse now appears, who is death with hell at his heels ; after which slaughter, hunger, and pestilence, &c. follow.† Under

* "*Equus niger famem significat,*" says Victorinus. He then cites Matt. xxiv. 7.

† That an extreme scarcity took place during the times of the general persecution, to which this seems to refer, we are assured by Lactantius. See his treatise de Mortibus Persecutorum, sect. 7. Arnobius, in his work adversus Gentes, in which he shews that the pestilences, &c. which happened in these times, ought not to be charged upon the Christians, is sufficient to prove that such things actually came to pass. See lib. i. passim. On one occasion his words are : "*Quid est istud, quod dicitur, invectam esse labem terris, postquam religio Christiana intulit se mundo, et veritatis absconditæ sacramenta patefecit ? Sed pestilentias, inquit, et siccitates, bella, frugum inopiam, locustas, mures, et grandines, resque alias noxias, quibus negotia incursantur humana, dii nobis important injuriis vestris, atque offensionibus exasperati.*" And on another : "*Nam quod nobis obiectare consuestis bellorum frequentium causas, vastationes urbium, Germanorum, et Scythicas irruptiones,*" &c. And again : "*Sed si per vos, inquit, nihil rebus incommodatur humanis ; unde sunt hæc mala, quibus urgetur et premitur jamdudum miseranda mortalitas ?*" That such things as these took place, surely there can be no doubt ; nor can there be any, as far as I can see, that they happened in fulfilment of the predictions made, Lev. xxvi.

these the fourth part of the earth falls. The white horse, as before, is taken from Zech. vi. 3. The slaughter, &c. mentioned seems to be cited from Ezek. xiv. 21—23, which admirably depicts the state of these times, and without doubt predicts it. See also Lev. xxvi. 21—26. Deut. xxxii. 20—25; which last has been cited and applied to these times. Hos. i. 6—10. Rom. x. 19, &c.

9—11. The fifth seal is opened; and now are seen the souls of the Martyrs, who cry, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* James the brother of John had been slain by Herod, Stephen by the Jews, and a martyr named Antipas, as we have already seen. Some of the disciples were to be slain, according to our Lord; and here we find that this has taken place, and that their cause is not yet avenged. At ver. 11, these have *white robes given them* (they are accepted and justified); and then they are told to rest for a season, until their fellows should be added to their number, and the times of vengeance should have arrived.* This all, therefore, is preparatory to the great catastrophe which the church then expected.

12—17. The sixth seal is now opened; and the begin-

Deut. xxxii. Zech. xiv. 12—15. Matt. xxiv. 7, &c. Eusebius too affirms, that nothing could exceed the prosperity of the Roman empire before the persecutions commenced; nothing the distraction and difficulties which prevailed in it after. Hist. Eccles. lib. viii. cap. 13, 14. Allusion is also made to these troubles in the edict of Maximinus preserved by Eusebius, lib. ix. cap. 7. And again, *ib.* cap. 8, he expressly tells us both of the scarcity and pestilences which then prevailed. Arethas likewise applies this to these times. Paulus Orosius, however, is the most particular on this subject; for in his history adversus Paganos, lib. vii. cap. 27, he compares the miseries suffered by the Romans during the persecutions to the ten plagues of Egypt, in which the coincidences are certainly very remarkable. He then concludes: “*Hi verò in quos Ægyptiorum forma transfunditur, permissa ad tempus potestate sævientes, gravissimis quidem permissu Dei Christianos cruciatibus persequuntur. Veruntamen iidem omnes inimici Christi cum rege suo Antichristo, accepto stagno ignis æterni, quod magna impediēte caligine, dum non videtur, intratur, perpetuam perditionem immortalibus arsurī suppliciis sortientur.*”

* Arethas tells us here, that up to the times of our Lord's passion, the judgments which God would execute upon the wicked were not known; but, from that period, not only the Jews but the Greeks suffered innumerable afflictions, through famine and the mutual slaughters which took place; if, says he, we may believe Josephus.

ning of sorrows exhibited. The first judgment mentioned is an earthquake; the sun is then turned to blackness, and the moon to blood. This is evidently taken from Joel, ii. 10, 11, 28—32. Matt. xxiv. 6—10; which can apply to none but these times. See Acts, ii. 17—20, 21. It is also cited as consequent upon the first tribulation, but before the final vengeance, by our Lord in his remarkable prophecy, Matt. xxiv. 29.* The stars next fall, the heavens pass away,† and mountains and hills are removed from their places: ver. 15 explains this, as intimating the fall of kings and great powers: ver. 13, 14, are evidently citations from Isaiah, xxxiv. 4, where judgments are denounced against Idumea,

* Among the marks of Divine vengeance mentioned by Orosius as attendant on these times, were: “sub Nerone . . . ubique morientium sanguis; sub Domitiano . . . satellitum militumque ejus improbis effrenatisque discursibus jussa principis exequentium; . . . sub Trajano plaga Judæos excitavit, &c. absque magnis multarum urbium ruinis, quas *crebri terræ motus* iisdem temporibus subruerunt; . . . sub Marco Antonino plaga, lues plurimis infusa provinciiis; . . . sub persecutore Severo creberrimis civilibus bellis, &c. . . . post Maximini persecutionem . . . intumescens crebro ira atque invidia, non per vulgi cædum, sed per vulnera mortisque principum ac potentium, &c.; . . . sub Gallo et Volusiano . . . plaga extitit, corrupto aëre pestis infusa, quæ per omnia Romani regni ab oriente in occidentem spatia, cum omne prope modum genus hominum et pecudum neci dedit, tum etiam corruptit lacus, infecitque pabula tabo; . . . octavam (plagam) in subversionem Romani orbis excitatæ undique intulere gentes, quæ cædibus atque incendiis cunctas provincias deleverunt; . . . cum Aureliano persecutionem decernenti, diris turbiniis terribile ac triste fulmen sub ipsius pedibus ruit; . . . novissima pœna est omnium idolorum perditio, quæ primitus facta in primis amabant. . . . Ibi (in Ægypto sc.) nunquam populus Dei postea ad servitutem retractus, hic nunquam postea populus Dei ad idololatriam coactus est. Ibi Ægyptiorum vasa pretiosa Hebræis tradita sunt: hic in ecclesias Christianorum præcipua paganorum templa cesserunt.” So that, according to Orosius, this deliverance was truly “after the manner of Egypt.” So Micah vii. 15—17: “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth,” &c. Gibbon thinks that half the human race must have perished during these times. Decline and Fall, &c. chap. x. It is probable that St. John is much nearer the truth in saying *one third*. (Chapp. viii. ix.)

† Arethas has some good remarks here: Τὸ δὲ μέλαν τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ τῆς σελήνης τὸ ἀφειργῆς καὶ αἱματωδὲς, τὸ τοῖς καταλειφθεῖσιν ὑπὸ τῆς θείας ὀργῆς ἀφώτιστον ἐνδείκνυται. τὸ δὲ πσιεῖν τοὺς ἀστέρας, καὶ τοὺς δοκοῦντες εἶναι φασγῆρας ἐν κόσμῳ πιστεῖται ὡς τοῖς γινομένοις ὀκλάζοντας. κ. τ. λ. According to Victorinus, we have here the last persecution.

Bozrah, and the nations generally; and, from the citations made from it in the New Testament, Matt. xxiv. 29, &c. (see also Ps. xlvii.), it evidently belongs to these times. St. Peter, speaking of the dissolution of the heavens, and of the expectations which the Christians had, in his days, of a new heaven and a new earth, evidently alludes to these predictions (2 Pet. iii. 12—15; and here too, St. Peter speaks of similar declarations, which some had misunderstood, in the writings of St. Paul). By the removal of mountains, great difficulties which had now been overcome, seem to be intended. See Is. xl. 3—5. Jer. iv. 19—31; which allude, in all probability, to these very judgments. In ver. 15, we have Is. ii. 12—21, cited, in which these times are certainly foretold. Compare the first five verses of this chapter with the subsequent context. In ver. 16, Hosea, x. 8, is cited, which is repeated by our Lord himself, Luke, xxiii. 30, and limited to these times. The great day of wrath, mentioned in ver. 17, is the general phraseology of the Old and New Testament, speaking of any heavy judgment of the Almighty, Is. xiii. 6, &c.; and particularly when speaking of this. See Dan. ix. 26, 27. Zech. xi. 4—14. Zeph. i. 15; ii. 11. Luke, xxi. 22, &c. So far, the progress of resistance to the servants of God, and the “beginnings of sorrows” seem to be portrayed: and these, according to the bearings of our context, and the intimations of the former prophets, applied in their most obvious sense, or by unerring authority, manifestly relate to the progress of the persecutions, and the judgments poured out and witnessed, during the first ages of the Church.

CHAP. VII.

Verse 1. Four angels stand on the four quarters of the world, and these are commissioned to hold the winds, &c. The imagery is apparently taken from Daniel, vii. 2, although the agents seem to be different; unless we take the winds in Daniel in the sense of spirits (רוחות), which the original will bear. In either case, they are God’s ministering spirits, as in other visions.

2—4. Another angel arises having in his hand a seal, and he cries out to these spirits, charging them not to execute their commission of vengeance, until he shall have sealed, or set a mark upon, God’s servants. The first notice of this

kind occurs in Exodus, where we are told that the destroying angel passed over every house, the lintel and door-posts of which had been sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb (Exod. xii. 7, 13). The passage here had in view by St. John is evidently Ezek. ix. 4—11, which is cited (ver. 6), and limited by St. Peter, 1 Ep. iv. 17: "THE TIME (IS COME)," says he, "that judgment must begin at the house of God," &c. No doubt, therefore, can remain as to the period in which this was to take place. The object of the Apocalypse, as well as that of Ezekiel, seems to have been, to assure the *true believers* that a *remnant* should be saved; which had indeed been promised again and again; and which, as we learn from the New Testament (Rom. xi. 5, 6, &c.), actually took place. According to St. James (chap. i. 1, &c.), as we have seen, there were some out of every tribe: and here again, ver. 4—8, the same thing is taught: and what is remarkable, every tribe is separately named; in order, as it should seem, to assure us, both that the catastrophe predicted could not take place until this should be done, and that a remnant of all should certainly be saved. The number *twelve thousand*, is, I suppose, only intended to imply, that a *considerable number* of each tribe was to be added to the Church.*

9. We have, in the next place, an indefinitely large number out of all nations brought into the Church, bearing about them the insignia of pardon and reconciliation, the employment of whom is to ascribe salvation to God and to the Lamb. This satisfies the terms of many an ancient prophecy. *Ten men out of ALL nations and languages* were, at that day, to take hold of the skirt of him who was a Jew, and to say, "*We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.*"† (Zech. viii. 23.) So Isaiah (xi. 12): "*He shall*

* The first fifteen bishops of the church of Jerusalem were, according to Eusebius (Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 5, and lib. v. cap. 12), all of Jewish extraction. He adds: . . . Συνεστάναι γὰρ αὐτοῖς τότε τὴν πᾶσαν ἐκκλησίαν ἐξ Ἑβραίων πιστῶν. Lib. iv. cap. 5. See also his admirable application of Rom. xi. to the times of the Apostles, in the remnant foretold to be saved. Demonst. Evang. lib. ii. cap. 3, near the end; and *ib.* cap. iv.

† Theodoret says on this place: Οὕτως τοὺς ἰερούς Ἀποστόλους, ἐξ Ἰουδαίων τὸ γένος κατάγοντας, ἐπόθουν οἱ ἐξ ἐθνῶν τῆς κλήσεως ἀξιώθεντες, πιστεύοντες δ' αὐτῶν ἀπολαύσειν τῆς σωτηρίας· οὕτω Φιλιππίσσιοι τὸν θειασίον Παῦλον ἐπόθουν. κ. τ. λ. in conformity with the declaration of our Lord: "*And other sheep I have,*

set up an ensign for THE NATIONS, and assemble the OUTCASTS OF ISRAEL, and gather TOGETHER THE DISPERSED OF JUDAH ;* Jer. xxiii. 1—8, *i. e.* a remnant of every tribe ; a circumstance which, after those times, nothing but a miracle can accomplish ; and this we have no warrant to expect. Our Lord's words, however, with regard to the calling of the nations, ought not to be omitted in this place : "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.*" In order that all nations may see, whatever the Jews may choose to do, that the purposes of God are accomplishing. Matt. xxiv. 14. Luke, xxiv. 47. Again, ver. 31, which this passage of the revelation seems particularly to have in view, it is said : "*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet ; and they shall gather together HIS ELECT from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,*" *i. e.* in its most extended sense, those who had not been a people to be his people, together with a remnant of the house of Israel.†

10—12. Praise and honour ascribed to God by all his redeemed church.‡

13—17. An explanation given, as to what they were who were thus clothed in white robes. They had come out of *great tribulation* ; they had been justified through the merits of Christ ; they were the members of the new Church, represented as enjoying their rest and their privileges. || See

which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John, x. 16. See also Micah, v. 4—8, with the parallel passages.—Primasius writes to the same effect.

* Οὐ γὰρ μόνην τὴν ἡπειρον οἱ θεῖοι ἀπόστολοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν θάλατταν περιαιούμενοι, καὶ τὰς νήσους, προσέφερον τοῦ ναυροῦ φωτὸς τὴν ἀκτῖνα.—Theodoret in loco.

† That this took place in the first days of the Church, is attested by most of the fathers, and by the apostolic fathers in particular : not indeed that *none* remained unconverted ; this prophecy has no where promised. See Justin Martyr, Apolog. pp. 28, 65, 89, 97, &c. Ignatius, edit. 1710. p. 65. Shepherd of Hermas, p. 295. Arnobius adversus Gentes, lib. i. p. 42, 3, &c. (edit. 1634.)

‡ "Universam . . . discrevit ecclesiam."—Primasius.

|| The prophecy particularly had in view here seems to be, Dan. xii. 9, 10 ; on which Ephræm Syrus says : "Designat futuram Apostolorum electionem et credentium ad eosdem audiendos concursum, quos prædicit

Is. iv. 5, 6; xxv. 4. xlix. 10; Dan. xii. 10, &c. John, x. xi. &c. We have the Church now formed; the gospel of the kingdom has been preached and received: and we must prepare for the visitations which are to mark the times of the end.

CHAP. VIII.

We have seen the servants of God sealed both Jews and Gentiles, in order that no injury might fall upon them; the Lamb too remains in the midst of them, providing for all their wants, and affording consolations for all their woes. We also know, from the New Testament, that the disciples were particularly commanded to be watchful and to pray during these times. Matt. xxiv. 42. Mark, xiii. 33. Luke, xxi. 36. 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2: and the circumstances of the case make it probable, that this must have formed a very considerable part of the service of the primitive Church.

Verse 1—5. We are here told, that upon opening the seventh or last seal, a pause ensued. Seven angels with trumpets then present themselves, as if ready to proclaim the Divine commands. In the next place, the prayers of the suffering saints are presented in a golden censer, and are accepted. The censer is then filled with fire from the altar, and is cast into the earth, in order, as it should seem, to commence the visitation of Christ, which was to be revealed in fire. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. See also Ezek. x. 2. Then follow *voices, thunderings, lightnings*, and an *earthquake*; and such had been the declarations of our Lord. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be.* “*There shall be wars and rumours of wars.*” “*There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places:*” and these actually came to pass.* After this, seven angels successively

Baptismi lavacro dealbandos. Judæos contra Christi interfectores severe judicandos et puniendos.” Hence, perhaps, the *enlightened* (φωτισθέντας) Heb. vi. 4; or, *Candidati*, persons dressed in white garments in the primitive Church, who were termed *Candidates*, and looked upon as being in a state fit to be introduced into Christ’s Church. The state of purity thus arrived at, is here, in the true Church, supposed to continue.

* See the notes on chap. vi., where these visitations are intimated as about to come to pass: here they are actually commenced.

sound, upon which the vengeance of Christ's revelation is carried on under various figures ; and, when the last sounds, it is merely to proclaim the victory of the Church ; and with this the eleventh chapter closes. Here, I think, ends the second vision. Let us trace a few of the particulars, and see how far we can identify them with the circumstances of these times.

7. The first angel sounds ; and hail and fire mingled with blood fall upon the earth, and a large part of the trees and the grass is burnt up. So in Isaiah, speaking of these very times, unless I am greatly mistaken, wickedness is said to bring about the burning of the briers and thorns, and a flame in the forests. "*Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as fuel of the fire,*" &c. Is. ix. 18, 19. Examine the scope of the whole chapter.* *Ib.* xxix. 17—24 ; xxxii. 18, 19 ; where the safety of God's elect is pointedly noticed in connection with these visitations. The last two can relate to none but these times.

8. The second angel sounds ; a great burning mountain is cast into the sea, and a third part of the sea assumes the appearance of blood. The figure is taken from Jer. li. 25, and is there used with reference to the destruction of the Babylonian empire ; a favourite topic also with St. John, by which he means to inculcate, that God's enemies, whether Jews, Gentiles, or both, however potent, shall thus be overthrown generally. I believe, however, that the circumstances relating to Babylon were applied by St. John to heathen Rome for other reasons. See also Ezek. xiv. 19—23. Amos, vii. 4.

10, 11. The third angel sounds, and a great flaming star falls from heaven, which lights upon a third part of the rivers and fountains of waters. The star is called wormwood ; it embitters the waters, and many die in consequence. The notion of the falling star seems to be taken from Is. xiv. 12, where the fall of Babylon is predicted : and, as Babylon appears in this book to be put for heathen Rome, the fall of

* From ver. 8 to ver. 13, the context applies to the times of the prophet : from ver. 1 to ver. 8, the times of the Messiah are certainly meant : from ver. 13 to the end, the denunciations seem general ; but, from their parallel passages, are most likely intended to relate to the times of the end.

the latter is here undoubtedly had in view by the Apocalypse. The star is further called wormwood, to denote, perhaps, the sorrows inflicted by that people, wherever they went. See Ruth, i. 20. Exod. xv. 23. The first prediction of this event is given in Jer. ix. 12—17, which will afford an ample comment on the place; and the parallel passage will fix its period. See also chapter xxiii. 9—15, where the same times are probably had in view: see the former part of this chapter.

12, 13. The fourth angel now sounds, and a third part of the sun, the moon, and the stars, is smitten, so as to produce great darkness. A better comment on this passage than Is. viii. 21, 22; ix. 1—7, cannot be given; which is a direct prophecy of these times. Another such prophecy is to be found in Zech. xiv.; and ver. 6, 7, mark out the particulars here mentioned.* The last verse (13) contains general denunciations of wrath, which must necessarily be referred to the same period.

CHAP. IX.

1—4. The fifth angel sounds, and a star falls from heaven, having the key, or power, to open *the well of the great deep* (τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου). I must be allowed to make a new translation here; because I believe the received one is generally taken in a sense unsuitable to our context. The Greek word ἀβύσσος, *abyss*, is often used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew תְּהוֹם, as in Gen. i. 2; vii. 11; viii. 2, &c.; in the two last of which we have αἱ πηγαὶ τῆς ἀβύσσου, *the fountains of the abyss*, which I take to be nearly synonymous with the φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου, *well of the abyss*, noticed above. The word תְּהוֹם is used to signify, first the *great mass of waters* which covered the earth before all was reduced to order by the Almighty; secondly, *the great sea*; or generally, any great mass of waters. To bring any one into *great waters, the depths*; or to bring up the waters of the *great*

* Hippolytus the martyr refers the *evening* to the time of the end; the *morning* to that of the resurrection: by which he probably means the end of the Jewish dispensation and of heathen darkness, and the resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness introduced by the Gospel. See Dan. sec. Sept. p. 121, where the context seems to require this interpretation; for it is added, ἀρχὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἱερίου αἰῶνος.

river, or the like, are frequently put in Scripture to represent circumstances of great distress and trouble; and often those which are the effects of war. So in Ezekiel, xxvi. 19: "*For thus saith the Lord God, When I will make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up THE DEEP* (Heb. תְּהוֹם Sept. τὴν ἀβύσσον) *upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee.*" By this must be meant, that some great and overwhelming power, and consequent calamity, shall be brought upon Tyre. And, perhaps, by parity of reasoning, the opening of the great deep, in the Revelation, will also imply the letting loose of some power to take similar vengeance. This, we are told, an angel does: which is sufficient for our purpose at present.*

The pit is opened; and it appears, from what follows, to be a vast receptacle of fire rather than of water; for we are told, that smoke issues out, such as to darken the sun, &c. This, however, in the language of symbols, can only be meant to raise the expectations as to the terrific events which are to follow. (See Joel, ii. 30. Acts, ii. 19. Matt. xxiv. 23, &c.) We have too, a further instance of this sort of climacteric transition; neither water nor fire is brought upon the people doomed to wrath, but locusts; and these, from what follows, are said to have power to torment, not to kill men, for a certain season; which torment is, however, described as worse than death. The sealed REMNANT, however, as already provided for, is not to be injured. At ver. 7, we are told, that these *locusts were like horses prepared unto battle*; they were richly caparisoned, or had marks of victory (crowns) on their heads; their faces resembled those of men; they had the hair of women (perhaps well trained, and with fine flowing manes); their teeth were like those of lions; their breastplates were those of iron (they had armour on); their wings rattled like chariots (their rush was audible and destructive). In their tails too lodged a poisonous sting; and their commission is to injure *for a season*. The king of the great receptacle of all that is thus injurious and destructive

* I do not, however, see any particular or strong reason why this may not apply to Satan and his emissaries, as principals in this matter: still, as these symbolical exhibitions appear rather to relate to what was to be done on earth, I would rather keep to this view of the subject.

commands them in person; and he is named THE DESTROYER. That some tremendous earthly power is here meant, I think there cannot possibly remain a doubt; and, if so, this will confirm the view taken of the first and second verses.* Let us now see whether we can find any further notice of this power.

In Joel, chap. i. 4, an army of locusts is mentioned, such as, by successive invasions, to have eaten up all the provision of the land. This is explained in ver. 6, thus: "*For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number, whose TEETH ARE THE TEETH OF A LION, and he hath the CHEEK TEETH OF A GREAT LION.*" Then follows an account of the general devastation made.

In ver. 15 of this chapter of Joel, we have the day of the Lord introduced, and said to be at hand; after which follow descriptions perfectly similar to some already noticed. In chap. ii. 2, the subject is continued; and the clouds, darkness, invincible warriors of the Apocalypse, with the times never before seen, nor again to be witnessed, of the spread of the Gospel, are alluded to. The fire is to consume before them (ver. 3); their appearance, as in the Apocalypse, is like the appearance of horses; and as horsemen shall they run. Their noise is like that of chariots, &c. (ver. 5), and themselves as a people set in battle array. (ver. 10.) *The earth shall quake* before them; *the sun and moon shall be dark*, and *the stars* shall withdraw their shining (ver. 11). The Lord shall utter his voice (Apocalypse, the angels sound their trumpets); "*for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?*" (ver. 11.) Then, at ver. 28, after the weeping, mourning, &c. of the true Zion, the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, &c. which we know, from inspired authority, belongs to these times. (See Acts, ii.)

It is remarkable enough, that Joel (chap. i. 6) describes this army as having the *teeth of a lion*; St. John describes

* Hippolytus, who suffered martyrdom during these times, speaking of Daniel's fourth beast, whose teeth were iron, says: ΗΔΗ δαμάζει καὶ λεπτύνει πάντα· ΗΔΗ ὑποτάσσει πάντας τοὺς μὴ θέλοντας· ΗΔΗ βλέπομεν αὐτὰ ἡμεῖς· "ΗΔΗ δοξάζομεν τὸν Θεὸν ὑπὸ σου (i. e. Δανιήλ) διδασκόμενοι. De Antichristo, par. xxxiii. Another writer, Judas by name, whose works are now lost, is mentioned by Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. cap. 7,) as having reckoned the seventy weeks of Daniel to extend to the times of the Emperor Severus; when, according to him, the Antichrist was to be expected.

his as having *iron teeth*. Daniel, chap. ii. 40, speaking of the fourth empire, describes it as being strong as *iron*; and, as *iron* breaketh all things, so shall it subdue those which preceded it. Again, in chap. vii. 19, the beast which represented this state, is said to have *teeth of iron*, and nails of brass; and that it should break to pieces, and stamp the residue with his feet. Again, in chap. viii. 23, it is said, that when transgressors shall have come to the full, a king of fierce countenance shall stand up; his power shall be mighty; he shall DESTROY wonderfully, (be an *Abaddon*, *Apollyon*, *Destroyer*,) and shall prosper and practise, and shall DESTROY* the mighty and the holy people. Then we have an allusion to the vision of the *evening and morning*, already noticed more than once. Again, chap. ix. 26, the desolation is described as coming on like a flood.

This power, then, which the Scripture itself has determined to be the Roman, it is said, shall plague men for *five months*, *i. e.* for a certain indefinite period. In Dan. vii. 25, it is said, “*they, i. e. the saints of the Most High shall be given into his hand until a time,*” &c.; *i. e.* until another prophetic period shall commence. The vision of the *evening and the morning*, mentioned Dan. viii. 26, certainly relates to this period of doubt and uncertainty. Again, chap. ix. 26, after threescore and two weeks, the people of the prince are to come and to destroy; after this the end is to be. See also Dan. xi. 30—39. Then at ver. 40, the END is to come. In ver. 12, a part of these visitations is pronounced to be the course of one woe.

13—21. The sixth angel sounds; after which, four angels which had been bound in the great river Euphrates, are set at liberty. His command is, “*Loose the four angels,*” &c. Our first question here will be, Where are we to look for these four angels, &c.? My answer is, in Daniel, chap. vii. 2, &c. unless I am much mistaken. The four winds, as here mentioned by our authorised version, may, as already remarked, be translated by *the four spirits*, &c.; but, in any case, the ministers of God may thus be depicted in symbolical language. Our version has here, *strove upon the great*

* It is true the Hebrew root אָבַד (*abad*), is not here used; but of this I make no account; my question is about things, not words.

sea; but this, I think, is incorrect. The Chaldee would be more literally rendered by, *were rushing out, with regard to the great sea: i. e.* were rushing out of the great sea, or were set at liberty, &c.; the particulars follow in the subsequent context. Some interpreters, with the Septuagint at their head, take this passage rather to mean, that these winds rushed into the great sea. I prefer the version already given, because the Chaldee verb here used, never means, as far as I know, to *rush into* any thing, but to *rush out*. If so, the angel's setting these ministers at liberty in the Revelation, is nothing more or less than an interpretation of the original prediction in Daniel. The last beast, however, mentioned by Daniel (ver. 7), is that principally had in view in the Revelation. An interpretation of this prediction is given to Daniel, in ver. 17, 18, &c.; and at ver. 19, the particulars respecting this fourth beast are stated, where his *teeth of iron*, as already remarked, are noticed. At ver. 21, he makes war upon the saints; at ver. 25, his antichristian character is stated; and at ver. 26 we have his fall. This is again the Roman power, beyond all doubt.

15. These four angels are commissioned to act for an indefinite time; and a third part of men is to be destroyed by them; they are not yet to make an end, because the period is not yet arrived, and because a remnant of all shall be saved.

17. We have a description similar to the foregoing; and it appears very probable, that this relates to the same power, rendered, as it should seem, still more furious. See 1 Chron. xii. 8; Is. v. 28—30, for similar phraseology. From the conclusion of this chapter, it should seem, that these visitations still fail of producing repentance.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. The angel here described seems to be the person of our Lord. See Rev. i. 16; Ezek. i. 28; Matt. xvii. 2.

2—3. He has in his hand a little book; that of this prophecy or revelation probably.* See also Is. xlii. 13—17; Jer. xxv. 30—33; Hos. xi. 10; Joel, iii. 16, with the context, which can refer to none but these times.

* “ Liber apertus Apocalypsis est quem Johannis vidit.—*Victorinus*.

4. "*Seal up those things,*" &c. Place them among those so sealed by Daniel; or, refer believers to those for the more minute particulars relating to these times.

5, 6. An oath is made, that time shall no longer last; * *i. e.* that dispensation which was temporal shall now come to a final close. See Deut. xxxii. 40—43. 7. This mystery shall come to its due termination, as foretold by God's servants the prophets, as soon as the seventh angel shall begin to sound his trumpet. Dan. xii. 5—7, which can relate to no other period than that already alluded to.

8, 9. John is commanded to take and to eat the book; which should be sweet, it is said, in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; *i. e.* it shall give pleasure, peace, and blessedness, to the believer in its declarations; but, as to his trials, it foretells them as bitter things indeed: many of them shall be slain, and otherwise tried. See Jer. xv. 16—18; Ezek. ii. 8—10; iii. 1—3, 14.

10, 11. The book is so eaten, and so found to the taste, &c.; the prophet is then commissioned again to prophesy in the face of, or against, many peoples, nations, and kings: not the Jews only, but the whole infidel world.

CHAP. XI.

This captivity of the true Church or Zion, seems constantly in this book to be compared with the Babylonian; and hence it is, that the great heathen state carrying on this warfare is termed Babylon; and that John is, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, furnished, like Ezekiel, with a book, (ver. 1, 2), and sent to prophesy; and that here we find him measuring the temple, just as stated by that prophet, chap. xl. 3, &c.; (see also Zech. ii. 1,) where a man is seen measuring the temple. It is only the true temple here, however, which appears to be thus signalled; the outer court, with Jerusalem itself, is left out of the account, and given up to be trampled down by the Gentiles for a season (three and a half symbolical years). On this expression, see the concluding remarks.

* Arethas seems to say on this passage, as the increase of light shall be so great and constant, that there shall be no night, so there can be no measure of time; alluding perhaps to chap. xxi. 25, which see.

3. God's two witnesses have power given them to prophesy, *i. e.* to preach, during 1260 days (about three years and a half) clothed in sackcloth.*

4. They are said to be the two olive-trees (see Zech. iv. 3—11, 14), and also the two candlesticks which stand before God. From the description following, as well as the places in Scripture which appear to be referred to, these seem to represent the Law and the Gospel.†

7. When they shall have given their testimony completely, *i. e.* shall have called in the remnant of Israel and vast numbers from among the heathen, the beast ‡ (Roman power) shall attack them, prevail, and cast them out for a time; and during this (three days and a half) they shall be considered as dead in Jerusalem; nevertheless, they shall not be buried. This is, perhaps, Zechariah's (ch. xiv.) time of doubtful light. Their heathenish enemies shall now exult, believing the victory to be complete; || but upon the expiration of this period,

* It is curious enough to remark, that the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus refers this, which it has evidently cited from the Revelation, to Enoch and Elijah, who, as it states, were immediately after the crucifixion to be sent to Jerusalem to fight with Antichrist, and to be slain by him. This is no doubt erroneous. I notice the place merely to shew what opinions were held in those days as to the times of Antichrist. See Jones on the Canon, vol. ii. pp. 316—320. Hippolytus the martyr also makes them Enoch and Elijah, and speaks of their preaching as taking place during the first half of Daniel's last prophetic week, and before the abomination of desolation should be set up. (Dan. secund. Sept. pp. 110—118.) The two persons, however, who stand on both sides of the river (Dan. xii. 5), he makes the Law and the Prophets.

† The Law and the Prophets, however, might here be meant. Arethas first gives the Evangelists, and then the common opinion that they were Enoch and Elias. Victorinus, however, declares that these cannot be meant, and proposes the *word of God*.

‡ The Roman power, as alluded to by St. Paul (2 Thess. ii. 4, &c.), according to Victorinus.

|| "This persecution," say the authors of the Universal History, vol. xv. edit. 1748, p. 502, *note*, "which was the tenth and last general one, broke out on the 23d of February (A.D. 303), and raged ten whole years with a fury hardly to be expressed. . . . Such numbers of Christians suffered death in all the provinces, that the tyrants imagining they had compassed their wicked intent, and entirely abolished Christianity, told the world in a pompous, but lying inscription, *that they had extinguished the Christian name and superstition, and every where restored the worship of the gods to its former purity and lustre*. But the Church triumphed," &c. The lying inscription alluded

God shall again inspire them with life; they shall stand erect; they shall be lodged in heaven, the Zion of God; and this their enemies shall witness. At this time (ver. 13) comes on a great earthquake; the far greater part of the city falls, and the remnant which fears, ascribes glory to the God of heaven. After this, ver. 15—18, the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, and the victory is proclaimed by the redeemed and triumphant Church, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of Christ. See the parallel passages. Here this second Vision appears to end. Ver. 19 commences the following one, containing the *third woe*, or *third Vision*, contained in this book.

SECTION III.

VISION III.

19. *And the temple of God was opened, &c.* Here commences another exhibition of the difficulties, warfare, judgments, &c. attendant on the propagation of the Gospel.

CHAP. XII.

Verse 1—4. *And there appeared a great wonder.... a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, &c.; and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, &c.* A great red dragon invested with immense earthly power, and who could command even a considerable part of the host of heaven or professing Church, stood before her ready to devour her child.

5. The child born is a man child; and, from his office described, which is *to rule the nations with a rod of iron*, we can have no doubt that the Messiah is meant. See Ps. ii.

to is probably one of those preserved by Gruterus, p. cclxxx. (Græv. vol. i.) which are as follow: "DIOCLETIANUS. JOVIUS. ET MAXIMIAN. HERCULEUS CAES. AUG. AMPLIFICATO. PER. ORIENTEM. ET. OCCIDENTEM IMP. ROM. ET NOMINE. CHRISTIANORUM DELETO. QUI. REMP. EVERTEBANT."—"DIOCLETIAN. CAES. AUG. GALERIO. IN. ORIENTE. ADOPT. SUPERSTITIONE. CHRIST. UBIQ. DELETA. ET. CULTU. DEOR. PROPAGATO." An edict of Maximin to the same effect is to be found in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, lib. ix. cap. 8. How, I say, the Christians of those times must have been struck when they compared these events with the prophecies of this book!

8, 9; Dan. vii. 13, 14, &c. At ver. 9, this dragon is termed the *old serpent*, called the devil; which will naturally lead us to his first exploit, mentioned in Gen. iii. 1, &c.

13. *When the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth* (Luke, x. 18; John, xii. 31), HE PERSECUTED THE WOMAN, &c.* Ver. 17. “*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to MAKE WAR WITH THE REMNANT OF HER SEED, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.*” From these passages, I think it must be evident, that the first prophecy relating to the mysterious birth and triumph of the Messiah, mentioned in Gen. iii. 15, is referred to: “*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between THY SEED AND HER SEED; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,*” see p. 218, where the same view has been taken of it. The Apocalypse here, therefore, goes back to the first intimation given in Holy Writ of the warfare to be

* The comment of Hippolytus is, I think, worthy of being given in this place. “*Mulierem amictam sole,*” says he, “*clarissimè ecclesiam significavit, Paterno indutam Verbo, quod sole micantius splendet. . . . Lunam sub pedibus ejus, cœlesti claritate lunæ in morem ornatam ostendit. Quod autem ait, In capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim, duodecim Apostolos designat, per quos fundata est ecclesia. . . . Raptus est filius ejus ad Deum, et ad thronum ejus, CÆLESTEM REGEM, non terrenum esse significat. . . . uti etiam David pronuntiavit dicens, Dixit Dominus, &c. Ps. cix. 1. Et vidit, inquit, draco, et persecutus est, &c. . . . Hi sunt dies mille ducenti sexaginta (dimidium scilicet hebdomadæ, Apoc. xi. 3; Dan. ix. 27), quibus Tyrannus rerum potietur, persequens ecclesiam fugientem de civitate in civitatem, et in solitudine in montibus latitantem,” &c. Mal. iv. 2, is then cited by way of consolation; and, in order to identify the times, Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark, xiii. 14; Luke, xxi. 20; 2 Thess. ii. 1—12; Dan. xi. 31. xii. 11; and Is. xxvi. 10, according to the Septuagint. After this the second coming of Christ is entered upon, in whom, it is said, we have hoped. Luke, xxi. 28; Matt. xxiv. 26—31; Ps. xviii. 7; Is. xxvi. 20, and Rom. i. 17, are then cited as referring to this event. In the next place, on *the resurrection and the kingdom of heaven*, Dan. xii. 2; Is. xxvi. 19; John, v. 25; Ephes. v. 14; Rev. xx. 6—14; and it is added, “*Nam secunda mors, stagnum est ignis urentis.*” Here, I believe, this father understood by the *resurrection and kingdom of heaven, a spiritual resurrection on earth, and an introduction into Christ’s Church.* In the next, and last, portion of his tract, he undoubtedly meant the general judgment; and on this point he cites Matt. xiii. 43. xxv. 34; Rev. xxii. 15. xxi. 8; Is. lxvi. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 13; although it may well be doubted whether all these passages allude to that event.—(*Hipp. de Antichristo*, edit. 1716.)*

sustained by the saints with this enemy; and it is remarkable enough, that he here also enounces the victory, just as it has been done there: *it. or he shall bruise thy head, i. e. the dragon was cast out.* The power and success of this enemy is noticed in ver. 3, 4: he had seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; *and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.* By this last passage, is probably meant, that he had obtained considerable power even among believers, such as to make them earthly, sensual, devilish. At ver. 7, this is again taken up, and a war is said to be carried on against Michael, the prince of the Jewish people, by this enemy and his adherents, till victory is proclaimed on the part of the Church, and the enemy is cast out. I think it extremely probable, that allusion is here made to the bruising of Christ's heel, as mentioned in that prediction; the third part seems to mean a schism in his mystical body. Whether the crucifixion of our Lord is also had in view, I will not say. From the analogy of Scripture, however, I should think it is not; because I do not see, how that which was voluntarily submitted to, in order to magnify God's law, and by which, in truth, the Church received its great triumph, can be classed among the victories of Satan. I am, therefore, disposed to fall in entirely with St. John's comment on this remarkable and interesting passage. See ver. 10, 11.

6 and 14. By the woman's flight and protection, and the length of time mentioned, I can see nothing more than God's faithfulness in never losing sight of this his ancient promise; the time mentioned is 1260 days; and a time, times, and half a time, *i. e.* the number three years and a half, or the last half of Daniel's prophetic week. See the concluding remarks.

10, 11. The song of victory is sung in heaven (*i. e.* in the Church, see on chap. i. 3) because the accuser is cast down; and which is ascribed purely to the blood of the Lamb as the efficient cause, and to the testimony and perseverance of the saints as the means employed.

We have here, therefore, the most ancient, and, as some have thought, a very obscure part of Scripture, taken, explained, and applied, as a source of consolation and encouragement for the suffering believers of these times. In this

point of view, this chapter must be very important and interesting, inasmuch as it gives us an authoritative interpretation of this passage; and cites the faithfulness of God from the very beginning, to shew that all his promises are sure and steadfast.

CHAP. XIII.

We now come to a second recital of the attacks to be made upon the Church and people of God, by Daniel's fourth monarchy.

Ver. 1. John sees a beast rise out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns (exceeding great power, see chap. xii. 3), and upon his heads are the names of blasphemy. This is, I think, beyond all doubt, nothing more than Daniel's fourth beast, chap. vii. 7, where it is said to be exceedingly dreadful, and to have ten horns. At ver. 8, he is said to have a *mouth speaking great things*. Ib. vii. 25; xi. 36—38; comp. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Such were the persecutors generally, and particularly Diocletian and his colleagues.

2. He is said to be like a leopard; and to have the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion; and the dragon, *i. e.* the devil, gave him his power, &c. At ver. 5, we have the duration of his period, forty-two months, or three years and a half as before, and the mouth speaking *great things*; this last is at ver. 6 explained to signify blasphemy against God, his tabernacle, and people: and, at ver. 7, he makes war upon the saints and *conquers them*. In Dan. vii. 21, this same blasphemous power makes war upon the saints and *prevails against them*. Ib. 25: it is said, that he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints, &c. and that they shall be given into his hand for the period of a *time, times, and half a time, i. e.* three years and a half as before; and then, ver. 27, as also ver. 22, the kingdom shall be given to the saints (Luke, xii. 32; xxii. 29; Col. i. 13; Heb. xii. 28, &c.); and this kingdom is never to end.

8. *All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, &c., i. e.* the world shall be divided between his kingdom and that of Christ, the names of whose faithful followers are said to be written in the *book of life*. See Dan. xii. 1, and Phil. iv. 3, where this is expressly said to be the privilege

of the Christians. The expression is first found in Exod. xxxii. 32.

9, 10. The believer's attention is arrested : and we are told that, *he (this power) that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity ; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword* (Is. xxxiii.). Which, it is added, is a theme for the faith and patience of THE SAINTS (τῶν ἁγίων). These prophecies must, I think, be identical ; and that of Daniel can mean no other than the Roman power.*

We are told (ver. 3,) that one of his heads was wounded to death, and that this deadly wound was healed. The antecedent to this must be, I think, the dragon mentioned in the preceding verse ; if so, the allusion to the passage in Genesis (chap. iii.) is still carried on, and a reason thus assigned, why the dragon and the beast are permitted to make war upon the saints and to prevail. By *being healed*, is perhaps meant, that the dragon had this power conceded to him, which he delegates to the beast or secular power of

* That the Roman power instigated by the devil, was understood here by the primitive Christians, is beyond all doubt, as may be seen from Irenæus, Lactantius, Tertullian, and others. There is, however, a passage in the Shepherd of Hermas, a work perhaps earlier than any of the foregoing, which I cannot help noticing. In Vision IV. it is said : " I saw a vision, brethren, twenty days after the former vision, a representation of *the tribulation that is at hand* : . . . and behold I saw a great beast, as it were a whale ; and fiery locusts came out of his mouth (Rev. ix. 3). . . . Now the beast came on in such a manner, as if it could at once have devoured a city." A virgin, whom he knew to be the Church (Rev. xiv. 4), passed by and told him, that he did well in this juncture to cast all his care upon God, and that he had, therefore, sent his angel, and had protected him from the beast. He is then commissioned to go and shew the Church that this beast is the figure of the trial that was about to come upon them. In the course of an explanation following, he is told, that by the fiery and bloody colour of a part of this beast is signified, that the age must be destroyed by fire (2 Pet. iii. 7) and blood, that the believers are thus to be tried, and that they who endure to the end shall be purified (Dan. xi. 35). The white colour denotes the world, or dispensation to come, in which the elect are to dwell (Rev. iii. 5, &c.).—Archb. Wake's edit. That all or most of this is copied from the Revelation, surely there can be no doubt ; and if so, it shews how this part of the book was understood at a period either in, or exceedingly near, the apostolic times ; which is all I cite it for. The following curious remark of Justin Martyr is preserved by Irenæus contr. Hær. lib. v. cap. xxvi. : " Well did Justin say, that before the coming of our Lord, Satan never dared to blaspheme God, because hitherto he knew not his own condemnation."

Rome to execute, (see chap. xx. 7). In ver. 4, both the dragon and the beast are said generally to be worshipped.

11. Another beast arises out of the earth. This has two horns like a lamb, and he speaks as a dragon speaks. From the description following, this appears to be the same with the *false prophet* (or heathen priesthood), mentioned in chap. xvi. 13, where the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, follow in the order here preserved.

12. *He exerciseth all the power of the first beast, (i. e. of the dragon, see ch. xii. the first of this vision), before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed: i. e. he seduces the nations, calling them to worship devils, and to make war upon the saints (xx. 8).*

13—17. Then follow some particulars which manifestly relate to idolatry, most of which, such as receiving a mark on their hands, &c., are visible enough in heathen countries to this day. The exclusive oppressions, here mentioned, took place during the persecutions, as may be seen in the Apologists.

18. Here is proposed a matter to exercise the wisdom of the believer: "*Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast,*" &c. Whatever may be said of the number 666 which follows, I am of opinion that, from the character of the preceding and following context, no one can for a moment doubt who and what this beast is, or that it is the Roman power, sustaining the office of a servant of Satan (the Pontifex Maximus, perhaps), and of a persecutor of the Church of God. The prophecies of Daniel, as already cited and limited by our Lord, even if we omit all the rest pointed out, are quite sufficient to identify this power; and, therefore, whatever the numerals 666 may mean, we cannot have the least difficulty is ascertaining the scope of the passage. Irenæus gives (ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ) *Lateinos* among other interpretations, and this he applies to the Roman power, which, according to the numerical character of the Greek letters composing it, makes up the number 666. Various other attempts have been made to ascertain these numbers, and to fix the person here meant, which I pass over; because I doubt, whether any reliance whatever can be placed on such a method of deduction: and, when I believe that the passage can be satisfactorily made out without it, my opinion is, that we need not

trouble ourselves concerning it. I am not without my doubts, however, whether this is not a false reading, and whether it has not been introduced by some early copyist, for the purpose of filling up what he might have supposed to be elliptical. The passage now is: ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ χξϛ' : and, taking away the numerals, we shall have, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ, parallel to the same Evangelist in chap. viii. 44, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, which has given abundance of trouble to the commentators. I am disposed to believe, that in each of these cases, the particle καὶ is the word on which the sense principally turns; and, that if we translate it by *even, nay, moreover*, or some such expression, which every one knows it will bear, we shall at once see what the Evangelist meant. In the one case, "for he is a liar, *nay, moreover* its father:" ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ (*i. e.* τοῦ ψευδοῦς, mentioned just before). So in the other passage: ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ, for it is the number of a man, *even, or, nay certainly*, his number, (*i. e.* τοῦ θηρίου, of the beast), character, or mark. It is not necessary, however, to my purpose, to insist on this; and I only suggest it as a probability. In the times of Irenæus another number viz. χις', 616, was also found, which is sufficient to shew, that liberties had been taken with this passage: and I cannot help adding the words of Archbishop Laud: "Numeralis illa theologia . . . non mihi placet . . . non sapit spiritum apostolicum."

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1—6. The Lamb occupies Mount Zion (his Church), with his servants who had been sealed of the seed of Abraham out of every tribe (see chap. vii. 4—8). This company is employed in giving praise to the Lamb, and in following him. They are uncorrupt before God, and are the FIRST FRUITS of the Gospel to him, or those who composed the first churches who were Jews, (see Notes on chap. vii.)

6, 7. An angel is now commissioned to carry the Gospel (which had indeed been made known from the beginning) to every people, nation, and tongue. So the Jew is called in first, and next the Gentile, as our Lord had commanded, (see also chap. vii. 9, 10, of which this seems to be only a repetition.)

8—11. Next in order comes the fall of idolatry; and, as

this seems to have originated at Babylon, for she is termed the mother of harlots and abominations (chap. xvii. 5), that place is said to have fallen, because all nations had become drunken with the wine of her fornication (see Is. xxi. 9; Jer. l. and li.) Upon the Gospel's being thus published, and the mother of idolatry condemned, woes are denounced against all who shall adhere to her system; and these woes, it is added, shall never end. This seems a part of the angel's message.*

12. Here is matter such as to stimulate the faith, and to call into its full exercise the patience of believers, of those who respect God's commandments, and hold fast the faith of Christ.

13. The happy end of such asserted by a voice, and attested by the Spirit of God. Here then is matter for consolation. See 1 Cor. xv. 18; 2 Thess. i. 7; Heb. iv. 9.

14—20. Then cometh *the end*; for the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven to judgment. See Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30. xvi. 27; Mark, xiii. 26. xiv. 62; Acts, i. 11, &c. At ver. 15, the command is given to thrust in the sickle, (see Joel, iii. 9—18; Matt xiii. 30—39.† xvi. 27), for *the time, it is said, is come*; the earth is then

* We have here some strong allusions to the doctrines inculcated in Joel, iii. 13; Matt. iii. 12. viii. 12. xiii. 37—43. xviii. 7, 8; 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 6. St. Cyprian's admonitions on this passage are: "Neque aliquis ex vobis, fratres dilectissimi, futuræ persecutionis metu, aut antichristi *imminentis* adventu sic terreatur, ut non evangelicis exhortationibus et præceptis ac monitis cœlestibus ad omnia inveniat armatus. *Venit antichristus*, sed supervenit et Christus. Grassatur et sævit inimicus, et statim sequitur Dominus, passionibus nostras et vulnera vindicaturus. Irascitur adversarius et minatur, sed est qui possit de ejus manibus liberare."—Lib. iv. epist. vi. Again, Libell. ad Fortunatum de Exhortatione Martyrii: "Desiderasti, Fortunate charissime, nobis, ut quoniam pressurarum et persecutionum pondus incumbit, et in fine atque in consummatione mundi antichristi tempus infestum *appropinquare jam capit*, ad præparandas et corroborandas fratrum mentes de divinis Scripturis hortamenta componerem, quibus milites Christi ad spiritale et cœleste certamen animarem," &c. And in the third book to Quirinus, c. xvii.: "Fortem congressionem esse adversus diabolum, et ideo fortiter nos stare debere ut possimus vincere. In epistola Pauli ad Eph.: *Non est nobis colluctatio*," &c. Cap. vi. 12—17. From which we may see in what way Cyprian, who himself suffered martyrdom, understood these passages of Scripture.

† This chapter refers, as it appears to me, particularly to these times. The blindness of the Jews is mentioned in ver. 14, 15, as cited from Isaiah, vi. &c.; then at ver. 16, 17: "*Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your*

reaped. At ver. 18, this is repeated; for the sickle is again thrust in, and the grapes of the earth are gathered. By this repetition, *certainly* or *intensity* seems to be implied, just as in the repetitions of verbal language: *Comfort ye, comfort ye*, &c. The grapes are now cast into a wine-press; and, without the city this wine-press, which we are told represents the wrath of God, is trodden. See Is. lxiii. 2—6, which seems to relate to this very time; compare the lxivth chapter. *These*, to use our Lord's words, Matt. xxiv. 8, *are the beginning of sorrows*; if not, the following particulars will enounce the same things in different words and symbols. That this must all have come to pass during, and immediately after, the apostolic times, the Scriptures just cited, particularly when compared with the preceding vision, will abundantly prove.

CHAP. XV.

From the conclusion of the first verse here, the following judgments seem to be intended to intimate *the completion* of God's wrath upon his enemies.

2—4. The saints, who had prevailed over idolatry, its powers, character (the *account of its name*, surely not the arithmetical value of the letters composing his name, but rather its *wiles, menaces, violence, and cruelty*,) are first represented as standing on a shining sea of glass, *i. e.* a pellucid pavement (see Exod. xxiv. 10), and praising their God and Saviour in perfect safety and peace. After this, the tabernacle containing the ark is opened, and seven angels issue out,

ears, for they hear." . . . "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see," &c. which limits the application of the parable. At ver. 21, the persecutions to arise are intimated, with the falling off of the unsound believers. At ver. 37, the sowing of the seed is limited to Christ himself. Ver. 39, we have, "*The harvest is the end of the world*, (*συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, the completion of the age, period, or dispensation); and at ver. 40: "*So shall it be in the end of this world*," (*ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντέλειᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, shall it be at the end of this age). *The Son of man shall send forth his angels*," &c. See also ver. 49: compare these with Matt. xxiv. 3, &c. where (ver. 15, 34,) the time is limited for the fulfilment of this period, and Heb. ix. 26, where it is said: "*But now once in the end of the world*. (*νῦν δὲ ἅπαρ ἐπὶ συντέλειᾳ τῶν αἰώνων*, at or upon, the consummation of the ages, periods, or the like, both of the Jewish polity, and of heathen darkness; the word *συντέλεια* referring to either, as the context shall require.)

clothed in white. To each of these the four living creatures (God's immediate ministers) give a golden vial, containing the seven last plagues, which it will be their business severally to discharge upon the earth. Ver. 5—7.

The chapter concludes by informing us, that the presence of God appears like a cloud in the temple, just as it had in the wilderness; and that none could venture in there, until these plagues, which seem to be nothing more than a repetition of those mentioned under the seals, should have been poured out.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. The commission is given to proceed: the first vial is discharged, and grievous calamities fall upon the idolaters: the second, and the sea is turned to blood: the third, and the rivers and fountains are thus polluted. (See the Notes on chap. vi.)

5—7. An angel praises God for his truth and his righteousness in thus avenging the cause of his servants, to which another responds in similar language. (See chap. vi. 9—11.)

8—11. The fourth vial is discharged, and the heat of the sun becomes intolerable. Men now blaspheme God. The fifth falls upon the seat of the beast, infidel Rome; and now her sorrows commence, and she blasphemeth God.*

12—15. The sixth angel discharges his vial upon the Euphrates, and its waters are dried up; so that the eastern kings (as in the case of the capture of Babylon) can pass through and attack the city. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, now do their utmost. Their unclean emissaries are sent forth working false miracles, for the purpose of deceiving men, and, if it were possible, the very elect. John now adverts to our Lord's prediction (Matt. xxiv. 42, 43), "*Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth,*" &c. &c. Under all these circumstances of trial, imposture, deceit, and false miracles, let the infant Church never be off her guard. Watching is her duty, prayer her strength.

16. The forces are assembled for the conflict. And now

* The allusions here are to the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, Exod. ix. &c.; and it is, as Micah had truly foretold, chap. vii. 15: "*According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt.*" See the Notes on chap. vi. Gibbon tells us, that not fewer than 5000 died daily in Rome during a period of these times. (Decl. and Fall, chap. x. &c.)

the seventh angel pours out his vial ; and the WORK IS DONE, THE PURPOSES OF GOD ARE NOW ACCOMPLISHED ! Thunder, lightnings, voices, earthquakes, such as had never before been witnessed, succeed.* Babylon is split into three parts ; the cities of the nations fall ; and their capital receives her doom. Every island now flies away ; and every mountain and hill is laid low. A mortal hail ensues ; and the tragedy is completed.

Here, I think, the chain of particular prophecy ends. The purposes of God, regarding his Church and the heathen, are now all fulfilled, (see chap. x. 6, 7. xi. 15. xvi. 17 ; Dan. xii. 7), the full time of THE END is come. The remnant of Israel has been sealed ; innumerable multitudes out of ALL NATIONS have been added to the Church (chap. vii. 3—17) ; the heavens had received Christ, until this glorious restitution of lost man had fully taken place (Acts, iii. 21) ; and now (ver. 15) he comes as a thief, and destroys his adversaries, both Jew and heathen ; and his kingdom, which is to last for ever, is firmly established.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—8. A general view of the rise, progress, and fall, of the powers engaged against the Church, being thus given, John now returns, just as Daniel does in his eleventh chapter, to give a more detailed account of the last, in order that no possible mistake may arise, as to who and what that power was. The Babylon here described, must, as we have seen, signify heathen Rome, considered both in its political and religious character. It is styled, in the first verse, “ *the great whore which sitteth upon many waters ;*” and it is said in the

* The denunciations in ver. 18 are taken from Daniel, xii. 1 ; see also Matt. xxiv. 21, and Irenæus contr. Hæres. lib. v. cap. xxix., where they are cited and applied to the early times of the Church. See also the Notes on chap. vi. It will be quite unnecessary further to ascertain the limits of the predictions here referred to ; I therefore leave them for the present. According to Victorinus, we must not look for a chronological order of events in this book ; but must be careful to note the progress of the Prophet. He adds : “ Quicquid igitur in tubis minus dixit, hic in phialis est. Nec est aspiciendus ordo dictorum, quoniam sæpe Spiritus Sanctus ubi ad novissimi temporis finem percurrerit, rursus ad eadem tempora redit, et supplet ea quæ minus dixit,” &c. (Bib. Patrum, tom. i. p. 578, ed. 1624). Babylon, according to him, stands here for Rome.

second, that she has intoxicated the kings of the earth with the wine of her fornication; that is, she sits as mistress of the world, in her political character (see chap. xiii. 7. xvii. 15, 18); and, in her religious, as the mother of harlots, and corrupter of its numerous inhabitants. In ver. 3, she is said to sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, *i. e.* in regal pomp; and that this beast is covered over with the names of blasphemy, *i. e.* teems as it were with the doctrines of error, and of resistance to the true God. It has also seven heads and ten horns, generally great wisdom and power: but this will be more particularly explained presently (comp. chap. xii. 3). In ver. 4, we have the wealth and abomination of this state symbolically depicted; and, in ver. 5, its character so given, as to leave no doubt on the mind of the scriptural reader, that the great head of idolatry is meant. At ver. 6, the insatiate rage of this state against Christ's followers is intimated, such as to have brought conviction to the mind of the Christians of that day as to what was meant.* A more particular description is, however, promised (ver. 7); let us now briefly notice that.

8. "*The beast that thou sawest was, and is not.*" I doubt whether this translation of the passage is correct; I should prefer: *The beast that thou sawest was, but remains, or continues, not,*† (that is, shall not continue); *and it is about to come up out of the abyss*, (see chap. ix. 2. xi. 7), *and to go into perdition*; *i. e.* it shall make war upon the saints, but finally perish. This last declaration may, I think, be taken as explanatory of the former, (*ὅτι ἔσται*) *remains not*, standing, as it does in a corresponding part of the parallelism. It is added: "*And they who dwell on the earth shall wonder*"—looking upon the beast, which had been powerful and a persecutor, but which shall not continue, although it now exist. So far we have nothing more than a general description of the progress of this heathen power. The following context is still more explicit.

9. "*And here is the mind....the seven heads are seven*

* "Et vidit, inquit, mulierem ebriam de sanguine sanctorum decreto senatus illius consummatæ nequitiae, et omnem contra fidei prædicationem etiam latam indulgentiam ipse dedit decretum in universis gentibus."—*Victorinus*.

† See on ver. 10.

mountains," *i. e.* are the seven hills upon which Rome was built, as shewn by commentators generally.

10. "*And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, (and) the other is not yet come,*" &c. By these, I suppose, John meant those emperors who were remarkable for the part they took in the persecutions against the Church. Now, if we turn to the tract by Lactantius de Mortibus Persecutorum, we shall find, that he makes Nero* the precursor of antichrist, *i. e.* the power which, according to St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii., was to be *taken out of the way*, before the man of sin could be revealed. And Nero, who reigned at that period, was certainly taken out of the way in a very remarkable manner, as the historians attest. Counting on, then, from Domitian, who is the first beast mentioned after Nero, till we come to Diocletian, we shall find that he is the fifth. The names given by Lactantius are—1, Domitian; 2, Decius; 3, Valerian; 4, Aurelian; 5, Diocletian. These, then, are probably the five mentioned in the context as now fallen. This fifth beast, it appears, appointed three other persons, viz. Maximianus, Galerius, and Constantius, to assist him in the government; but, according to Lactantius and Eusebius, Constantius acted rather as a friend than an enemy to the Christians. Excluding him, therefore, Maximianus and Galerius will make up the number *seven* mentioned in the 11th verse; and these were persecutors and beasts (*bestiæ*), according to our authors, in the worst sense of the terms. The eighth, and indeed the last, who generally persecuted the Church, was Maximin, a creature or rather a beast appointed to take part in the empire upon Diocletian and Maximian's withdrawing from the government; he was, therefore, literally *of the seven* (ἐκ τῶν ἑπτά): he was appointed for their convenience, and principally by the intrigues of Galerius, the leader and adviser, as it should seem, of this last and most dreadful persecution. By the first five being fallen, is probably meant, that our vision is now at a stage beyond their

* St. Paul, according to Hippolytus (de Antichristo), styles Nero *the lion*. 2 Tim. iv. 17: "*I was delivered,*" says he, "*out of the mouth of the lion.*" Victorinus supposes them to have been Vespasian, Titus, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, because the book, he says, was written in the times of Domitian. Nerva was the other to be expected. To make the eighth, however, he adds Nero.

times, and in those in which the politics of Galerius principally prevailed, but before those of Maximin came into play. By "*the beast that was, but is not, or rather continues not,*"* is, I believe, meant, the persecutor whom Providence *has allowed* shall come into action, but who shall soon go into perdition, which was the fact with respect to Maximin; after whom the supreme command fell into the hands of Constantine. Lactantius now concludes his tract, affirming that those, beginning with Diocletian, who had assumed the *titles of divinity* had totally disappeared; he then praises God for the triumph which he had thus granted to his Church, just as we find it done wherever the victory is announced in the Revelation.

11. "*The beast that was, and is not,*" &c. The power which existed as a persecutor ceases to be so with this king; it remains such no longer; it shall nevertheless perish: and such was Maximin in every respect.

12. "*And the ten horns are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet,*" &c. For a full and satisfactory explanation of this and the following verses, I must refer the reader to the Commentary of the very learned and elaborate Dr. Hammond; the general scope of which, however, is as follows. The ten kings here mentioned seem to signify the rulers of those barbarous Gothic nations which lay to the north of the Euxine sea, of the Danube, and the Rhine, (the ordinary boundary of the Roman empire in those parts): their number is thus given by Procopius: *Astrogoths, Wisigoths, Vandals, Gepide, Longobardi, Heruli, Burgundians, Huns, Franks, Saxons.* It is not pretended, that *every* part

* It is usual with the Orientals, as already remarked, when they use the same word more than once in the same context, to apply it in a different sense in each case. In this instance, therefore, ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, may signify, *was, but it remains, or continues, not*: taking a signification in the last place, in which this verb is often found. See Matt. ii. 13, 14, 15; Mark, ix. 5; Luke, i. 80. ii. 6; 2 John, 2, 3, &c. So at the end of verse 8, τὸ θῆλον ὅ, τι ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καί τις ἔστιν, *the beast which was, or has been, but continues not (shall not continue), although he (now) exist.* Mr. Griesbach, not understanding the meaning of the Evangelist, has, contrary to his own rule, introduced what he thought an easier reading, viz. καὶ πάρεσται, which there can be no doubt, the copyists had so altered for the same reason. The received reading is beyond all doubt the true one. In like manner does the Persian بودن signify *to be, or remain.*

of the Roman empire came under the actual government of these powers ; but that they were the agents here had in view who lent their aid to the beasts or persecuting emperors, and then at length turned about, and were instrumental in the destruction of the state. In this sense the fathers who lived during these times interpreted the passage. Tertullian says : “ *Romani imperii abscessio in decem reges dispersa,*” the departure of the Roman empire dispersed into ten kings : and Irenæus, “ *Et decem regibus, in quos dividetur quod nunc regnat imperium,*” the ten kings into which the empire which now reigns shall be divided. No direct testimony indeed appears as to these kings having been employed ; but Gibbon tells us, that under Aurelian a compact was entered into by the Goths, according to which they supplied 2000 auxiliaries, chiefly cavalry, to the Romans.

14. “ *These shall make war with the Lamb,*” &c. : *i. e.* these shall at first resist, but finally shall receive the faith of Christ, so far at least as to place them on his side.

16. “ *These shall hate the whore, and make her desolate,*” &c. The destruction of the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals is too well known to be mentioned here. Dr. Hammond may be consulted on this subject with great advantage.

18. The woman is described as being the imperial city, which at that time existed,—*i. e.* heathen Rome, beyond all possible doubt.*

* Hippolytus the martyr, who lived during these times, cites both the xviith and xviiiith chapters at length, and then gives this remarkable comment. “Apertissimè in his testimoniis sigillatim declaratum est, de tormentorum judicio, quæ extremis temporibus, per tyrannorum, qui tunc erunt, injuriam illam, incessura sunt : operæ pretium verò est, ut et tempus diligenti examine exponamus, quando scilicet futurum sit ut hæc eveniant, et cornu illud parvum inter eos emergat. Nempe quando crura ferrea QUÆ ETIAMNUM RERUM POTIUNTUR, ad vestigia pedum digitosque evaserint . . . Ostendet verò nobis Daniel hæc ita proposita. Ait enim : *Et disponet testamentum multis hebdomada una. Et erit in dimidio hebdomadæ auferetur sacrificium meum et libatio,*” &c. He goes on to say, that during the first half of this week of years, Enoch and Elias (*i. e.* the two witnesses of John. He gives the same persons also in his comment on Dan.) shall give their testimony in sackcloth, preaching repentance to the whole world. He then says, that of Christ there are two advents, the one in humility, which had passed ; the other in glory (Dan. vii. 13, &c.). When these preachers

CHAP. XVIII.

1—24. We have here nothing more than another Revelation, given for the purpose, perhaps, of marking out with greater strength the certain fall of heathen Rome. The terms are in many cases taken from the ancient prophets, for reasons already detailed ; and, as the marginal references in the common Bibles will point these out, they need not now be dwelt upon. From the declarations of the last verse, we may be sure that the same persecuting spirit is dwelt upon, in order, as it should seem, to leave no doubt on the mind of the believers of that day, as to what was meant.

CHAP. XIX.

1—6. A general thanksgiving in the church for the victory thus obtained. *The Lord God omnipotent now reigneth.*

7—21. The marriage of Christ with his Church is now portrayed (see Ps. xlv.). After this we have the marriage-supper or feast. The figures introduced in the Psalm alluded to are continued, and Christ goes forth conquering and to conquer. His followers (disciples) are clothed in fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints, (ver. 14). His universal empire, as formerly foretold (Ps. ii.) is brought forward, and so is the vengeance to be executed upon his enemies, (Is. lxiii. 3, &c.)

17—21. The destruction and perdition of his foes are dwelt upon. The beast and the false prophet are taken (ver. 20) and cast into hell. The rest are slain by the sword of the spirit, which is his word.

CHAP. XX.

So far, the beast and false prophet are destroyed. We

have finished their testimony, then the beast commences his war (Apoc. xi. 7. xiii. 11 ; Dan. vii. 8.) We are then told, that this beast is the anti-christ, and the two horns the false prophet. After this the number of his name (666) is mentioned ; but the father doubts his powers to unravel it, because many names, as *Titan*, *Euanthas*, *Lateinos*, &c. are found to contain the number ; he believes, however, that the event will *soon* determine this, particularly as the times were now coming on. I may remark, that although this father occasionally offers some fanciful comments on the Scripture, I think that the result he generally arrives at is the true one, and that too which had been held in the apostolic times.

now come to an account of the overthrow and final subjugation of the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil.

Ver. 1—3. An angel descends from heaven, and binds the dragon; he then casts him out into the abyss (comp. Luke, viii. 31); and to this place he is confined for a certain period, here termed *a thousand years*. If we turn to Luke, x. 17—20, I think we shall find the Scripture had in view, in this first particular, by St. John: “*And the seventy returned again,*” it is said, “*with joy, saying, Lord, even THE DEVILS ARE SUBJECT unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I BEHELD SATAN AS LIGHTNING FALL FROM HEAVEN. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*” In Matt. xii. 28, 29, we also have a passage which will afford us considerable light here; it is this: “*But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God* (in opposition to that of Satan) *is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first BIND THE STRONG MAN? and then he will spoil his house.*” Compare Isaiah, xlix. 22—26. lxi. 1, &c.; Ps. xlv. 16. lxxviii. 6. xci. 13, 14. cvii. 9, 10; Mark, iii. 27. vi. 7—13. xvi. 17, 18; Luke, xi. 20—22; John, xii. 31; Eph. ii. 2. vi. 12, 13, 16, &c. It is besides a remarkable fact, that not only were the devils subject to Christ and his Apostles, but among the Gentiles, where Satan’s kingdom had hitherto been undivided and undisputed, no general, and, as far as we know, certainly no individual, resistance was made to the preaching of the Gospel. Where resistance was made, it was usually stirred up by the infidel Jews; and, in order to do this at Damascus, the authority of the chief priests was necessary; for without this, it is probable that Saul’s efforts would have been unavailing. At Athens, indeed, Paul was disregarded and ridiculed, but he was not persecuted; and, if we may credit St. Luke, he actually made converts there, even in the Areopagus itself, (Acts, xvii. 34). During this period, therefore, the disciples may have been truly said *to reign with Christ* even among the Gentiles, (see 1 Cor. iv. 8), and, that this reign was undisputed: nor is it said that it was to cease with this period, but only that it should be disputed, in Satan’s being loosed *for a season*,

which appears to have taken place under the general persecutions. Another consideration, and one of a most important character, is, the context is here manifestly *symbolical*, (not *literal* or *explanatory*), just as it is in the case of the twelve thousand out of every tribe being sealed (chap. vii.), and in the measurings made in chap. xi. Had commentators duly attended to this circumstance, this chapter would not have presented such difficulties as it appears to have done. If this be the case then, the period termed *a thousand years*, must commence sometime during the ministry of our Lord; for now was Satan *bound* or *limited in power*, and those held in bondage by him were set free for the first time, as far, at least, as Scripture touches on this question. Again, mention is made of a time termed by the Prophets *the last days, the day of the Lord, that day*, and the like. If we turn to the second epistle of St. Peter, chap. iii. ver. 3, we shall find it termed "*the last days*." In ver. 7, it is, unless I am very greatly mistaken, termed *the day of judgment*, &c. At ver. 4, some seem to have doubted whether any such period would ever arrive; and, in answer to this, we are told at ver. 9, that "*the Lord is not slack (tardy) concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering*," &c. Again, ver. 8, it is said, that *one day* is with the Lord as a *thousand years*,* &c., *i. e.* it may signify any considerable

* That the context of St. Peter relates to this period, there can be no doubt; and if so, it is not improbable St. John may have had this very passage in view when this Scripture was first indited. It is interesting to trace the state of opinion in these early times; and, in this point of view, the apocryphal and spurious gospels, &c. are valuable. In the Gospel of Nicodemus I find the great victory obtained by Christ over Satan, particularly after His death, much dwelt upon, which may perhaps be considered as illustrative of this point, (see Jones on the Canon, vol. ii. 308, &c.) See also Arethas from Andreas, who adds, on the number 1000: "Porro mille, non omnino rationi consonum est, ut certum illum numerum accipiamus: sed millenarium numerum significare imaginamur, aut *multitudinem*, aut perfectionem. Mille itaque annos aut eos qui interfluunt à *Christi adventu usque ad antichristi adventum* (sive sint decies centum, sive etiam his pauciores) non est nostrum exacte cognoscere." The binding of Satan, too, he refers to Christ, and Luke viii. is cited, which he says points out the overthrow of idolatry, &c. with the spread of the divine will throughout the world, &c. The short season in which Satan is to be loosed, he compares with Matt. xxiv. 22. See also his Commentary on chap. xx. 7, 8, where he refutes the sensual millenarians; tom. ii. p. 816, ed. Par. 1631. Victorinus

period of time ; and this is probably copied from Ps. xc. 4 : “ *A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday,*” &c. St. Peter appears to say, this period of expectation may seem long to you, and of its ever arriving the unbelievers may doubt ; it is, however, still but short in the estimation of the Almighty, particularly as he has purposes of mercy to execute during its continuance. Its conclusion shall come, however, as “ *a thief in the night,*” (ver. 10), just as our Lord had predicted, (Matt. xxiv. 43—51. xxv. 1—7), and before *this generation* shall have passed away. This period, therefore, during which Satan is said to be bound, *i. e.* in which miraculous powers were exercised by the church, may very properly be termed *a thousand years*, in the highly figurative language of this book, just as the sealed out of every Jewish tribe were said to be *twelve thousand*. In both cases the language is symbolical, and a considerable number can only be meant. In that under consideration, both the commencement and the end may perhaps be determined with sufficient accuracy. We are next told, that at the conclusion of this period, Satan shall again be set at liberty ;* but this is to continue only for a short season (Matt. xxiv. 22) ; which seems to have terminated with the general persecution. (See Matt. xix. 28 ; Luke, xxii. 28—30 ; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.)

here says : “ *Millenarium numerum perficiens, integrè creditur regnare cum Christo, et apud eum recte ligatus est diabolus. Qui vitii et dogmatibus hæreticorum irretitus est, in eo solutus est diabolus. . . . adveniente abominandi adventu,*” &c.

* Many intimations of this period may be collected both from the Old and New Testament. In Dan. viii. 23, it is said, “ *When the transgressors are come to the full.*” See also Amos, viii. 8, &c. ; Micah, iii. 8—12. vii. 2—7 ; Zeph. i. iii. 7 ; Zech. xi. 4, &c. xiii. 2, &c. ; Malachi, iv. 1, &c. (Euseb. Demon. Evang. lib. ii. cap. 1.) Matt. xxiv. 12 : “ *And because iniquity shall abound,*” &c. See 2 Tim. iii. 1—5 ; 2 Thess. ii. 3—9 : “ *Whose coming is after the WORKING OF SATAN.*” See ver. 11, 12 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1, &c. ; iii. 3, 4, &c. : whence it should seem that an extraordinary effort would be made by the enemy of man, commencing at some time about the end of the Apostles’ ministration, and continuing for a considerable time afterwards. By the binding of Satan, therefore, seems to be intended, the extraordinary powers afforded to the Apostolic church, for the work of the ministry, (see 1 Cor. xii. 4—10, 28, &c.), for the edifying of the body of Christ, for building up his church. “ *All power,*” says our Lord, “ *is given unto me in HEAVEN and in EARTH. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising*

4. The saints are now seen on thrones, exercising judgment, *i. e.* in their spiritual character judging the world.* The souls also of those who *had experienced the first resurrection*, and had thus revived and reigned with Christ during this period of expectation, but had been crowned with martyrdom, and in the commencement of this book (chap. vi. 9) are represented as calling for vengeance, are also seen.

5, 6. "*This is the first resurrection.*" Those who had become dead to the world, had been buried with Christ in baptism, and had risen with him in the renewal of their minds (see John, xi. 25, 26; Rom. vi. 3—11, &c.), may truly be said to be in this state; and that this is the sense here intended, the next verse (6) is sufficient to prove, where it is said, by way of explanation, generally: "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,*" &c., *i. e.* they who are thus reborn shall ever enjoy all the privileges of believers.† (Comp. chap. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5. with Luke, xxii. 29. See also chap. ii. 11. xxi. 8. and here, v. 14). It is said also (ver. 5): The rest of the dead lived not again, *i. e.* received not the Gospel, and with that a second birth during this period, but remained in a state of death, and open to the further attacks of the devil.

This passage appears to me to be nothing more than a

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world," (ἐως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, *until the completion of the age or dispensation*). This is the first intimation we have of Christ's *universal* kingdom having taken place; from this time, therefore, it must have commenced; from this period to the end of the Jewish dispensation, during which this kingdom was to be set up and confirmed, and Christ be with his disciples in power, *is the period of the scriptural millennium*. By the loosing of Satan, seems to be meant the power afforded him to try this infant church, for the purpose, perhaps, of purging it, and of assuring future ages that the mighty power of God was now manifested. That these two periods did not commence together, we learn from the New Testament; and that Satan's power was not *fully* exerted till about or after the close of the apostolic age, is equally certain. The mystery of iniquity had indeed begun, and many believers had fallen; but its *full* force affected not only them, but the Jews and Gentiles also about that period. So we find, the Gospel is miraculously taught in all nations, a remnant of the Jews are saved; and then the trial commences,—the full power of Satan, in the Jew, the Roman, and the false teachers, is exerted to the utmost.

* So Arethas on this place,

† So also Arethas on the passage.

citation from Dan. xii. 1, 2, &c. At verse 1, times of trouble, such as had never been witnessed, are predicted; during this, believers are to be delivered: and, as it has been cited by our Lord, and applied to the apostolic times, there can be no doubt that it must here be referred to the same period. At ver. 2, "*Many*," it is said, "*of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" More literally, *And many of the sleepers of the earth-dust shall awake; these to eternal life, but those to the reproaches of eternal contempt.* It is then added: "*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness*" (Lit. And the justifiers of many, or those who declare the many justified,) "*as the stars for ever and ever.*" Now, I cannot help thinking, that this must refer to the apostolic preaching; for they persevered in declaring, that it was now *high time to awake out of sleep*, and that justification unto life was open to all. But our Lord has cited a part of it, and this with reference to the erection of his kingdom: "*Then,*" says he (Matt. xiii. 43), "*shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER,*" &c. (See ver. 40: ἐν τῇ συτλείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου: comp. Heb. ix. 26) which can with propriety be applied to none but the apostolic times; and if so, *a spiritual resurrection, or a new birth to righteousness*, must be meant both by Daniel and St. John: and so Irenæus takes it: "*Christus est lapis,*" says he, "*qui præcisus est sine manibus, qui destruet temporalia regna, et æternum inducet, quæ est justorum resurrectio.*" Contra Hæreses, lib. v. cap. 26. See also Luke, ii. 34: κείται εἰς ΠΤΩΣΙΝ καὶ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΝ (resurrection) πολλῶν. The language here used both by St. John and Irenæus, it ought to be observed, is purely symbolical; and therefore, according to our principles, ought to be interpreted as such. (See on chap. i. 3). Had this been always duly borne in mind, this passage would not have proved so fruitful a source of mistake as it has done both in ancient and modern times. But this is not the only thing to be wondered at here; we have another, equally remarkable, which originated in very ancient times, and has been carried down to the present day: I mean, with regard to the last four chapters of the work of Irenæus, just alluded to. That father, it should be remembered, is there

arguing against the Gnostics and others who allegorised the Scriptures. He accordingly goes on to shew, that these things, such, for instance, as the *first resurrection*, &c. must take place on earth, and not in heaven; that Christ drinking *the wine new in his Father's kingdom*, must relate to the Church on earth; that the reign of the just must also take place here; and that the glorious times predicted by the prophets must all relate to that reign. And in this the pious father is certainly correct. The most remarkable part of his comment, however, usually adverted to, occurs in chap. xxxiii. where he cites a tradition from Papias, stating that at this period *every vine shall bear ten thousand branches, every branch shall have as many limbs*, and so on. This Eusebius (Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. last chap.) has condemned, and thinks that it was Papias who generally gave rise to the notion of an earthly paradise. My remark is: I can see no reason whatever for supposing this. Papias might have thought proper to symbolise the kingdom of heaven by a very fruitful vine, just as our Lord has by a grain of mustard-seed, which, being at first exceedingly small, will produce a very large tree, such as to afford safety and shelter both to the birds and beasts; or, as he has symbolised his own person, by a vine, his servants by the branches, which must be purged in order to their producing *much fruit*. It is quite evident, I think, from Papias's expressions, as cited by Irenæus, that he did not intend to be understood literally; when, for instance, he says, that each vine shall have *ten thousand branches, limbs, bunches*, &c. &c., things quite out of nature, and which have no possible connection with religion, unless taken figuratively; and the wonder is how Eusebius could have so far forgotten himself as to think they had, particularly as he has also used language equally strong and liable to be misunderstood, when speaking of the glories of Christ's church. See the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, lib. i. cap. 10. near the end, where he cites Is. xxv. 6, which might easily be converted into the doctrine of an earthly sensual paradise. But Eusebius had perhaps been offended by the doctrines of the Millenarians, and therefore language of this bold sort was likely enough to be thought heterodox by him. The heretics might indeed have mistaken this tradition; but so has Eusebius: and yet Papias is not to blame. The same has been

the case with the law, the prophets, and the gospels, and, in this respect, Eusebius charges Cerinthus; and yet no one will hence argue, that the fault lies in those writings. The same may be said both of Papias and Irenæus; both are capable of being misunderstood; and, as far as I can see, both have been misunderstood. I will merely remark, in conclusion, that on this view it is impossible to make out any consistent sense whatever in the context of Irenæus; but, when we consider against whom he was writing, and take into the account the symbolical language used by the prophets, which he cites in great abundance, as well as certain parts of the New Testament, which will scarcely admit of any interpretation except that which he gives, we shall find that the father is simple, easy, and generally accurate, on this interesting question.* In one instance I think he is wrong: he makes this first resurrection to take place after the destruction of antichrist, (which would be true in some sense). St. John, however, makes it take place before that event, which I understand to be during the (παλιγγενεσία, Matt. xix. 28 or) first preaching of the Gospel by our Lord and his Apostles.

On this interesting subject, then, see Irenæus, lib. iv. cap. 25. who cites as decisive on this point, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4; Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, 17, 21; Dan. vii. 8, 21, 25. The passage "*a time and times, and the dividing of times,*" he takes to signify three years and a half, during which antichrist is, according to him, to reign on the earth. He then quotes 2 Thess. ii. 8—12, which I have already noticed as referring to the loosing of Satan at the expiration of the apostolical millennium. Again, he cites Daniel, viii. 12, 23—25, and concludes: "*Ex quibus omnibus non tantum quæ sunt apostasiæ manifestantur, et quæ sunt ejus, qui in se recapitulatur omnem diabolicum errorem; sed et quoniam unus et idem Deus Pater, qui a prophetis annuntiatus, a Christo autem manifestatus. Si enim quæ a Daniele propheta sunt de fine, Dominus comprobavit: Quum videritis, dicens, abomina-*

* The only difficulty I can find in this father, is in chap. xxxiii. near the end, where he speaks of the animals being reduced to human authority; but this surely can be stretched no farther than the supposition, that under Christian governments, the carnivorous beasts shall be confined to their native wilds, so as not to prey upon man.

tionem desolationis, quæ dicta est per Daniele prophetam," &c. So Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, and on his journey to suffer at Rome: "*The last times are come upon us*; let us therefore be very reverent, and fear the long-suffering of God," &c.—Archb. Wake's edit. p. 69. And in the Catholic Epistle of Barnabas, (*ib.* p. 163): "searching diligently into those things which *are near to come to pass,*" &c.... "For the consummation of sin is come, as it is written, as the Prophet Daniel says, (Dan. viii. 23): And for this end the Lord hath shortened the times and the days, that his beloved might hasten his coming to his inheritance. For so the prophet speaks: *There shall ten kings reign,* &c. chap. vii. 24, 7. We ought," adds he, "to understand this also," &c. Again, p. 187: "His Son shall come and shall abolish the season of the wicked one, and judge the ungodly; and shall change the sun;....then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day." *Ib.* p. 194: "The day is at hand....the Lord is near, and his reward is with him." Tertullian's notions on this subject, which are sufficiently fanciful and confused, may be seen in the Lord Bishop of Lincoln's excellent work on that father, pp. 362, 363, and an abstract of the comment of Hippolytus here on chap. xii. &c.

7, 8, &c. At the expiration of this term, Satan is accordingly loosed, or, in the words of chap. xiii. 3, 12, his deadly wound is so far healed as to enable him to make war upon the saints and to succeed to a certain extent. So here, he goes forth and collects numbers from among the unconverted Gentiles, and then surrounds the camp of the saints; but fire comes down from heaven, as in the case of Elijah, and the army is destroyed. The dragon now, who deceived the nations, is cast into hell, where the beast and false prophet are also lodged, (compare chap. xii. 12); and this is to be their portion to all eternity.* Here ends the conflict with the great foes of the Church. No future conflict of this description is to be expected. The throne of God is now fixed in the earth, the Books, the Scriptures of truth, are now opened; the Law to instruct and to condemn, the Gospel to encourage and to save; and according to their declarations, all who come into judgment shall receive their doom,—"*This*

* See Justin Martyr, Apol. (ed. 1700) p. 56.

is the second death," i. e. that which succeeds the mortal life of those, who are spiritually dead while they live, (1 Tim. v. 6, &c.)

CHAP. XXI. XXII.

The conflict with the earthly Jerusalem, the beast, and the false prophet, being now over, we have nothing more to do than to recount the particulars of victory, and to see in what way these apply to the ancient oracles of God, and to the future glories of his kingdom.

Ver. 1—6. We here have a vision of the *New Jerusalem*, or Church of Christ descending from heaven, as given in the symbolical language of the prophets. Let us advert to the particulars.*

"*I saw a new heaven and a new earth,*" &c. Allusion is here made to Is. lxv., which commences with particulars relating to this period, as may be seen from Rom. ix. 25, &c. In ver. 8—10, the remnant to be saved is also mentioned. See Rom. ib. 27, and the passages there referred to. Again, ver. 11—15, we have the utter overthrow of the infidel

* So the Commentary of Arethas, or rather of Andreas (for there is a palpable difference in their opinions), on this place. Lactantius also, describing the glories of these times, thus addresses his friend Donatus:—"Audivit Dominus orationes tuas, Donate carissime.... Ecce addetur his omnibus adversarius; *et restituta per orbem tranquillitate, profligata nuper ecclesia rursus exurgit, et majore gloria templum Dei, quod ab impiis fuerat eversum, misericordia Domini fabricatur....* Nunc post tantæ tempestatis violentos turbines placidus aër et optata lux refulsit. Nunc placatus servorum suorum Deus jacentes et afflictos cælesti auxilio sublevavit. Nunc mœrentium lacrymas, extincta impiorum conspiratione, detersit. Qui adversati erant Deo jacent; qui templum sanctum everterant, ruina majore ceciderunt; qui justos excarnificaverant, *cælestibus plagis et cruciatibus meritis nocentes animas profuderunt.*"—*De Mortibus Persecutorum*. So Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. ix. cap. 8. "Quæ dum ita geruntur, magnus ille ac cælestis Christianorum propugnator Deus... benignæ suæ erga nos providentiæ serenissimam lucem nobis restituit," &c. And again Lactantius, at the end of the tract just cited: "Ubi sunt modo magnifica illa et clara per gentes *Joviorum et Herculiorum cognomina, quæ primum à Dioclete ac Maximiano insolenter assumpta, ac postmodum ad successores eorum translata, viguerunt?* Nempe delevit ea Dominus et erasit de terra. Celebremus igitur triumphum Dei cum exultatione, victoriam Domini cum laudibus frequentemus, diurnis nocturnisque precibus celebremus, ut pacem post annos decem plebi suæ datam confirmet in seculum." The English reader may consult Bishop Burnet's translation of this work (*On the Deaths of the Persecutors*).

Jews, and a *new name* to be given to the Church. Then from ver. 17 to the end, the prediction respecting the *new heavens and earth*, with its privileges, are enumerated ; and which is again adverted to in chap. lxvi. 22.

2. “ *And I John saw,*” &c. The Evangelist seems to have his eye principally on the xlvth Psalm (which St. Paul has applied to Christ, see Heb. i. 8.) from ver. 9 to the end of which, the spiritual union of Christ with his Church is symbolically predicted, and the ornaments of the bride are particularly mentioned. In Isaiah, chap. lii. the subject is also taken up ; and this portion of Scripture has, we know (see Luke, iii. 6 ; Rom. ii. 24. x. 15 ; 2 Cor. vi. 17, &c.), been applied to the Apostolic times by inspired authority. Hence I think, we may rest assured, that both the prophets and the Apocalypse had these times before them, when these declarations were made.

3. We have here an explanation which cannot fail to make all clear and decisive : “ *Behold,*” it is said, “ *the tabernacle of God is with men,*” &c. generally, “ *and they shall be his people,*” &c. That is, the Church is, in all its beauty, purity, and splendour, now universal ; the remnant, according to the election of grace, have come in, and with them the countless myriads of the Gentiles ; and the same God, who is rich to all, is now their acknowledged Creator and Father.

4. “ *And God shall wipe away,*” &c. Here, the consolations of true Christianity, or, what is the same thing, of *complete* (Col. ii. 10) Christians, are depicted : not, let it be remembered, the character of professing Christians generally ; for many of these, although within the walls, are frequently without the pale, of the Church, as we shall presently see. Reference is again made to the prophecies, and the language is mostly symbolical. See Is. xxv. 8. xxxv. 10. lxi. 3. lxxv. 19. “ *There shall be no more death ;*” no more *spiritual death*, because these are partakers of the first resurrection (see chap. xx. 5, 6). St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 23, &c. seems to have had some of these passages in view, when he says : “ *Christ the first fruit (i. e. from the dead) ; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming,*” &c. to ver. 27, where he appears to extend the privileges of the first resurrection to the second ; or, in other words, taking his theme from the doc-

trines of the first, has passed on to the second, as may also be gathered from other passages in this chapter (see ver. 21, 22, 45—49). “*For the former things are passed away.*” The Jewish polity and ceremonies, together with heathen darkness, Christ having prevailed over both. So in ver. 5, “*Behold I make ALL things new.*” See Isaiah, xliii. 18—21, (comp. 2 Cor. v. 17—19). Then, from ver. 22 to the end, we have the conviction and utter rejection of the infidel Jews.

6. “*It is done.*” The purposes foretold from the beginning are now completed. So chap. xvii. 17, “*until the purposes (words, ῥήματα) of God shall be fulfilled,*” which are now all completed, and the heavenly Jerusalem appears in all her glory and beauty. “*I am Alpha,*” &c., the Almighty who spoke by the prophets; see the places pointed out in the first vision.

Ib. “*I will give unto him,*” &c. I, that is Christ (see Is. xii. 3. lv. 1; John, iv. 10, 14. vii. 37) will provide for my disciples abundantly out of my grace, so that they shall lack nothing. Similar assurances are given in the next verse, which ends with the promise of adoption.

8. There still remain, even after the general victory, *the fearful, unbelieving, abominable*, and the like, whose portion, however, is, that they are to be partakers in the *second death*; i. e. eternal judgment awaits them in the life to come.

9—27. We have here another and more particular description of the structure, character, and privileges, of the new Church, which is followed by an assurance that nothing evil shall by any means participate in its glories. This description sets out by one of the angels telling John, that he will shew him the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, that is, the Church espoused to Christ, as noticed in Ps. xlv. See Is. liv. 5; Jer. iii. 1, 2, 14—19, &c.; Hos. ii. 1, 2, 16, 19—23; Eph. v. 23—32, &c. At ver. 10, the sight witnessed is said to be that of the *holy Jerusalem*, which, it is evident from the context following, signifies the same thing. Various parts of Scripture are here alluded to. “*The holy Jerusalem*” is probably put here for the spiritual Zion, or true believers, and its descent from heaven seems to be taken from Isaiah, lxxv. 17—18, where it is said to be made new. See also Ezek. xlviii. 30—35. In ver. 11, allusion is made to Is. liv.

12: “*And I will make thy windows of agates,*” &c. *Ib.* ch. ix. 1: “*The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*” See also ver. 19, 20, both which chapters, as we learn from inspired authority, belong to the times of the Gospel.*

12, 13. We have here a description of the walls and gates of this new city, taken principally from Ezek. xlviii.; that of the gates from ver. 31—35, which represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

14. The walls of this new city we perceive here are founded upon the twelve apostles of the Lamb: in other words, this city was erected by their labours; the spiritual edifice was reared upon their preaching, and is still guarded from error by a recurrence to their instructions.†

15—17. The measures of this city are mentioned, after the manner of Ezekiel, see chap. xlv. 1, 2; xlviii. 8, &c.; and chap. xl. 2, &c.; xliii. 10—12; whence perhaps we may conclude, that the spiritual building or true Church is meant in each case; or, in the words of Ezekiel, that “*the whole limit thereof....(shall be) most holy.*”

18—20. We have first a symbolical description of the worth and purity of this holy assembly. The wall is assi-

* So also in the Commentary ascribed to Arethas on the 11th verse, which is, however, no doubt the production of Andreas.

† In the Shepherd of Hermas we have a symbolical exhibition of the building of the Church, which, I suspect, was copied from this part of the Revelations. This vision commences at p. 211 of vol. i. of Archbishop Wake’s *Apostolic Fathers* (second edition). The Church is here represented by a tower, built upon the water with *bright square stones*, so polished and fitted together, that it appeared to be only one stone. Some stones are rejected, and cast at a distance from the tower. When this tower shall be finished, the workmen are all to feast, by which was probably understood the great victory (p. 214). The well-jointed stones are the orthodox teachers, Bishops, Doctors, Ministers, &c., some of whom had suffered and fallen asleep. The rejected stones are either the reprobates, or such as may still repent and be saved. At p. 220 we are told, that the work shall *soon be accomplished*. After this, pp. 311—14, Christ is represented as having come, and as actually examining his Church. Then, at p. 320, the rock upon which the Church is built, as well as the gate to it, is, we are told, the *Son of God* (not Peter). It is added: “How can that be, seeing the rock is old, but the gate new?” The answer is: “The Son of God is indeed more ancient than any creature, insomuch that he was in council with his Father at the creation of all things. But the gate is ... new, because he appeared in the *last days, at the fulness of time,*” &c. In the same manner this place is taken in the Commentary of Arethas.

milated to jasper, and the city to pure gold, pellucid as glass (see chap. xv. 2). We then have its foundations compared with precious stones, in imitation of Isaiah when speaking of the same thing, chap. liv. 11, 12, which is also followed by a description of the inhabitants, who are all to be taught of the Lord, and to enjoy that peace which passeth all understanding. See John, vi. 45; Rom. xv. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 10. vii. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 9, &c.; Phil. iv. 7, &c.

21. The gates are said to be pearls; by which we are perhaps to understand, the purity and excellency of the church during the times of Israel; for at ver. 12, we are told that the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written thereon. Here then we have the pearls of Israel united with the more brilliant gems of the Gospel, composing a city which is at unity with itself. Compare the remainder of this verse with the latter part of ver. 18.

22, 23. "*And I saw no temple therein,*" &c. The shadowy system of the Theocracy had passed away; Christ, who was the end of the law for righteousness, having now been evidently set forth, the true worshippers draw near in spirit and truth (John, iv. 23). The next verse is an application of the prophecies in Isaiah, xxiv. 23; lx. 19, 20.

24—26. "*And the nations,*" &c. The prophecies of Isaiah, lx. 3; lxvi. 12, are here cited as being fulfilled, both of which should be carefully examined, and compared with the particulars here and elsewhere mentioned; whence, I think, it will be seen that they clearly relate to the apostolic, and immediately subsequent, times: for now it was, that kings and queens became the nursing fathers and nursing mothers of the Church; such they have remained; and such they shall remain, according to the prophets, to the end of time.

27. Absolute exclusion is, nevertheless, determined against every one who worketh any abomination. Isaiah says virtually the same thing: see the last verse of his prophecy, which is explained by our Lord, Mark, ix. 40—50, &c., as relating to the progress and establishment of his kingdom. Comp. Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13; xxv. 30, where the same event is apparently had in view. See also Is. xlv. 1—7, 11—15; Jer. vii. 28—34. viii. throughout; Ezek. xxi. 25—

27, a passage which clearly alludes to these times, if indeed the whole chapter does not, and chap. xxii. throughout; to which may be added many passages from the minor prophets.* The following occur among others in the New Testament: Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42, 50; xxi. 41—46; xxii. 7, and xxiv. generally, to which many similar passages might be added. If this be the case, there can be no promises for unbelieving Jews. So ver. 15 of the following chapter: “Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers,” &c. These, whatever may be their descent, their professions, or their claims, in other respects, are not citizens of the New Jerusalem; Christ knows them not; and they consequently remain in *outer darkness*.†

CHAP. XXII.

We learn from the 25th verse of the preceding chapter, as cited from Isaiah, lx. 11, that the gates of this new and holy city are never to be shut, in order, as we are told, in both places, that the glory of the nations might be brought into it. In Ezekiel, chap. xlvi., where we have many particulars about the temple and its services, we are told (ver. 2) that “*the gate shall not be shut until the evening*.” But in the Apocalypse it is said, that no night shall be there, implying perhaps, that the shadowy and less explicit system of the ceremonial law shall now have for ever passed away. From the circumstance, however, of the gate of the city being left open, and the additional one, that the forces of the Gentiles are constantly to be brought in, it should seem, that although the purposes of God are, as it regards his church, completed, they are not as it regards those who shall still remain without its pale. And accordingly we find, in Isaiah, lx. 11—14, Ezekiel, xxxiv. Joel, iii. 18—21, and again, Isaiah, xxx. 25, which is more to our purpose: “*There shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, i. e. where the Lord’s temple shall be (see chap. ii. 2), RIVERS AND STREAMS of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers shall fall.*” (26.) “*Moreover, the light*

* Amos, v. 2. viii. 1, 2. ix. 4—8; Zeph. ii. 7. iii. 13; Zech. xi. 6, &c.

† The Commentary of Arethas on this chapter will be read with great advantage.

of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold," &c. and here, Revelation, xxii. 1, 2, after the erection of God's spiritual temple, ample provision for this is made. Again, Isaiah, lxvi. 10—12, after an allusion made to the building of the temple, and manifestly applying to these times, we are told that the glory of the Gentiles shall come into the Church like a flowing stream; and in Ezek. xlvii. 1—12, Rev. xxii. 1, 2, as just noticed, a river carrying with it the blessings of life is seen flowing out into the desert for the healing of the nations; and, as it should seem, for the purpose of bringing in all who shall be willing to be partakers in its blessings. In Ezekiel we are told (xlvii. 8) that these waters shall, after going out of the Temple, heal the very waters of the ocean.* Then, at ver. 9, that "*every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish...for they shall be healed,*" &c. which can by no means be applied to the confined system of Judaism. At ver. 10, mention is made of fishermen spreading their nets, which seems to have been had in view by our Lord when he told his disciples, that he would make *them fishers of men*. At ver. 11, many places are mentioned; whence it should also seem, that some places would still resist the healing properties of this river of life, and offer nothing to encourage the industry of the fisherman.

If this then be the view both of the Prophets and St. John, (and to these innumerable other Scriptural testimonies may be added,) the Word of God affords us no intimation whatever, that such a millennium will ever arrive, in which the New Jerusalem or Christian Church, shall contain *all* God's rational and accountable creatures; but rather, that some will always remain enemies to Christ,† and that still a missionary labour will remain for the exercise of the Church, by

* See the extract from Theodoret on this subject at the end of this work.

† So says the author of the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas; and this was probably the prevailing opinion in his days. "But why," says he, "was the wool and the hyssop put together? To signify that *in the kingdom of Christ there shall be evil and filthy days*, in which, however, we shall be saved."—Edit. 1710, p. 174.

which many will, from time to time, be added to the congregations of the blessed.*

3—5. These, wherever they may be, will be delivered from the curse of the law; God and the Lamb will be with them: they shall be his; they shall see him by faith; they shall bear his name; they shall have the light of life; and they shall also reign with Christ for ever and ever. Here end the symbolical predictions of the character and privileges of the new Church: and strictly are they, as far as I can see, in unison with the predictions both of the Old and the New Testament. Now follow some exhortations addressed particularly to the believers of St. John's times, for the purpose of affording them encouragement, and of confirming their faith.

6. This Revelation may be relied upon; for God, who first spoke of these times and circumstances by his holy prophets, has now sent his Angel to declare among the believers, that their fulfilment is *at hand*; they shall *shortly* come to pass, as it is said also in the first vision. 7. *Behold, I come quickly.* The period mentioned in Matt. x. 23; xvi. 28; xxiv. 34, &c. must now have nearly past away, and that given for the commencement of these things been at hand. Then follows the exhortation with which this most instructive book commenced (chap. i. 3): "*Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of this book.*"

10. *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book;* FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND. Then come the usual denunciations of prophecy.

12. *BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY, &c.*; both to reward and to punish, as the several cases shall require.†

13—16. *I am the first and the last*; as in the first vision.

16. *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify, &c.* Here Jesus

* Victorinus, after giving a most admirable commentary on the preceding context, concludes by saying: "Ergo audiendi non sunt, qui mille annorum regnum terrenum esse confirmant, qui cum Cherintho hæretico sentiunt." It is much to be regretted, that the work of this able divine, and truly great luminary, of the primitive Church, has not come down to us in a more perfect form. In its present condition, however, it is highly worthy of the attention of every Theologian.

† So the early Fathers: "The time is at hand in which all things shall be destroyed, together with the wicked one." Epist. Barnab. edit. 1710. p. 194, &c. &c., as already referred to.

identifies himself as before (chap. i. 7, 8, 11, &c.) with Jehovah of the Hebrews ; and then, ver. 14, 15, pronounces blessings on those who keep God's commandments, and are found within his Church, with the curse of exclusion on those who resist.

17. The Spirit or Comforter given to the Church, joins with the Church itself in inviting Christ's speedy appearance, in order that his kingdom might be soon established. All who attend to the words of this book are then invited to join in the prayer. In the next place, all who thirst for these consolations are also invited to join them, with the assurance that they shall be freely and abundantly given ; for many, both Jews and Gentiles, yet remained to be brought in.

18, 19. If, in these early days, the words of this prophecy be misapplied, either wilfully or not, the person so doing shall fail of attaining to the end for which they have been given. Such, if a believer, shall not discover the force of their consolations, on the best possible view of the case ; and may fail during the sifting times now at hand : but, on the worst, he will be found to fight against God, in resisting the united testimony of Scripture as to the revelation of his Son, and of the erection of the new dispensation for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile.

20. SURELY I COME QUICKLY. In these explanatory declarations, it should be remembered, we have nothing symbolical ; and, from the repetition of this in particular, we may rest assured, that the intention of the writer was to inculcate the notion, that these things would in a very few years begin, at least, to take place. "*Even so (i. e. quickly) come, Lord Jesus,*" responds the faithful but suffering Church. Let the men of this adulterous generation know, that thou art not slack, as some men count slackness ; but that, if thou seem to tarry, it is that the purposes of mercy might be completed, which are indeed now hastening to their fulfilment.*

* See also the Commentary of Arethas on this chapter.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

IT has been shewn in the preceding pages, from the constantly concurring testimony of the Prophets and Apostles, that the visions there considered must have related to the end of the Jewish polity, of the dominion of heathenism, and to the erection of the Christian Church, or spiritual kingdom of heaven, throughout the whole earth; making, nevertheless, a provision for calling in those, to the very end of time, who may not have known, or embraced, the faith necessary to make them a part of this endless and all-glorious kingdom. This view of the case supposes, that all particular prophecy has received its fulfilment; which has already been mentioned. We now proceed to consider those more particular marks given in Holy Writ for the purpose apparently of defining the character of the times, in which these events should take place, and in order to satisfy, as far as may be, the reasonable scruples of believers. I must here premise, that as we now have to do with language *purely symbolical*, we must not be anxious to take the numbers of persons, months, days, and the like, as if intended to be made out with mathematical precision: on the contrary, if we can find them agreeing with one another, in every case, in a manner suitable to this sort of language, it will be quite unnecessary to seek for any solution still more precise; because we shall, in such case, be applying a measure to our context which it was not intended to bear.

We shall commence our inquiry, then, by a reference to Daniel, ix. 24, 27, where we have a whole period given, and this divided or parcelled out into several smaller divisions, intended to answer, as it should seem, to several distinct epochs. In the first place, we have *seventy weeks* appointed for the whole period* (ver. 24). I will not here pretend to ascertain

* Ephræm Syrus thus speaks, in his Commentary on this passage:—
 “Ita ut urbs quidem sub initium septuaginta hebdomadum instauranda sit, sub earum vero finem Christus sit venturus; fluent itaque hebdomades septuaginta usque ad adventum Christi. Et domus quidem, seu templum et civitas septenarum hebdomadum spatio instaurabuntur, Christus vero exactis aliis ab instauratione sexaginta hebdomadis, occidetur. *Cum scilicet elapsa fuerint tempora urbi et populo concessa*” (ܩܠܐ ܒܡܠܚܒܐ ܐܚܬܐ), &c. tom. ii. Syr. et Lat. p. 222.

what is the length of one of these weeks, as many have done, because I do not think it at all necessary to do so. The circumstances given in this chapter and elsewhere, are quite sufficient to determine the time intended to be notified; and this, I also believe, was all that was intended to be taught by the prophet. Up to our Lord's time, no one could doubt that the Messiah had not yet come; and, when he came, he took special care to limit the fulfilment of this prophecy, as well as that of the others connected with it.*

In ver. 25, we have this period divided into two other subordinate ones; one of seven weeks, another of sixty and two weeks. In the following verse, it is said, that after sixty and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off. This period must, therefore, in all probability, commence at the expiration of the afore-mentioned seven weeks; and if so, this seven weeks refers to the period commencing with the giving of the edict by Cyrus to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and ends with the final establishment of the Jews in Palestine, and the rebuilding of the wall under Nehemiah. We are next told (ver. 26), that, after the expiration of these sixty and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off; and, that consequent upon this generally shall the destruction of the sanctuary be, and the further desolations, which had also been determined and spoken of in the preceding chapters, *i. e.* relating to the power of heathen Rome, and of heathenism generally as a dominant system. These two periods together will make in the whole sixty-nine weeks. Again (ver. 27) we are told, that He, the Messiah, shall confirm the covenant with many during *one*

* It is very true, that, taking these seventy weeks as weeks of years, and amounting in the whole to four hundred and ninety years, we come to a period very near, at least, to that in which the Gospel dispensation was set up; but it is equally true, that so many difficulties beset the inquiry, and so much doubt rests upon the conclusions, that very few considerate persons have appeared satisfied with the results obtained. But even here, this method of calculation is set up, in order to meet, if possible, *the events* of the prediction. The events are allowed, therefore, to be of primary importance. I believe this most cordially, and have no doubt they are quite sufficient, and infinitely more valuable in their own single capacity, than when combined with the extraneous considerations of either solar or lunar chronology. This is true of this whole period: and, if I am not greatly mistaken, will be found to be remarkably so, with regard to its several portions, as we shall presently see.

week,* which completes our number of *seventy*, or the whole period marked out by our prophet.†

This *week* is, in the next place, divided into two portions: "*in the midst of the week*," it is said, "*he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*"‡ Desolations are then predicted, "*even until the consummation*;" that is, during the remaining half of this week, further desolations, it is determined, shall go on to the very end of the whole period.

This last period then (the foregoing ones having been previously determined), is that which now concerns us; and

* Ephræm: "Christus Testamentum suo sanguine sanctum, et firmum efficiet per hebdomadam unam." Com. in loc. This is limited a little lower down, by an appeal to Matt. xxiv. 17.

† Out of this prophetic week of Daniel seems to have grown the Jewish, and indeed early Christian, notion of the world's lasting for seven thousand years, making each day equal to a thousand years: the last day, or one thousand years, was expected by the one to be sabbatical, by the other generally to be the millennium; and then the end of all things was supposed to follow, just as the predictions here made state. Irenæus, lib. v. cap. 33, speaks of this time as being the *Sabbath of the just*, in which God also shall rest from his labours. At this time it is, according to him, that Christ intimated his drinking of the fruit of the vine with his disciples, new in his Father's kingdom on earth. It has been supposed that Irenæus here meant the *earthly paradise* of the heretics; but there does not appear to be the least reason for supposing this, as I have already remarked. And this, if we apply it to the times of the Apostles, is probably the true intent of our Lord's words. (See Matt. xxvi. 29. Mark, xiv. 25. Luke, xxii. 18.) For He established the rite of the holy communion, and then declared to his disciples, that he would no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until he drank it new, *i. e.* in the very beginning of the erection of God's spiritual kingdom, which should take place immediately after his own resurrection (see Matt. xxviii. 18): and then he would either actually drink it with them (see Acts, x. 41), or would meet them in the Spirit, wherever two or three of them should be gathered together (Matt. xviii. 20). See also, on these supposed last thousand sabbatical years, Epist. of Barnabas, edit. 1710, p. 187—189.

‡ Theodoret refers this to the time of our Lord's sacrifice, because the efficacy of sacrifice then ceased, and the veil of the Temple was accordingly rent. (Matt. xxvii. 51.) The middle of this week he then makes equal to three years and a half, during which our Lord's ministry continued. I prefer going to the fact. Sacrifice did not cease to be offered till a considerable time after our Lord's death; and, during that period, the Gentiles were generally called into the Church,—an event which was to take place before this catastrophe.

if we can find this, divided as it is here and also limited and defined in similar terms in other parts of the Scripture (which I think we can), our results on this head will be complete. The first intimation, then, which we have of the periods relating to this last week, *i. e.* which is immediately to succeed the death of the Messiah, is in Daniel, vii. 25, where we are told, that they (*i. e.* the saints of the Most High) shall be given into the hands of the Roman power, for *a time, times, and the dividing of time*: that is, taking one time to signify any one period, we shall have three and a half of such periods in this portion of Scripture; and, from the following context, closing with a mention of the end, I suppose the latter period of this prophetic week is intended to be conveyed.* I do not think it necessary here, or, that the general voice of prophecy relating to the events here had in view, requires that this period should be determined by chronological calculation. I leave it, therefore, as before, undetermined, except by *events*, to which we shall shortly come.

The next intimation we have of this last week, occurs in Dan. viii. 13, 14; and here it is said to continue for *two thousand and three hundred days*; that is, *the vision concerning the daily sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation: and then, we are told, shall the sanctuary be cleansed, or, as it is more literally given in the margin, “*evening*” (and) “*morning* ;”† or, as I understand it, during this period, which considerably exceeds that elsewhere marked for the division of the week just alluded to, shall the period pertaining to the sanctuary, termed *evening* and *morning*, continue; that is, a period commencing sometime before the division of the pro-

* Theodoret takes this period to be three years and a half, which he collects from the one thousand two hundred and ninety days mentioned elsewhere, and to happen during the power of Antichrist. His words are : *Καὶρὸν οὖν, καὶ καιροὺς, καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ, τρία ἡμισυ ἔτη λέγει, ἃ τὸ πέρας ἐκείνο τὸ λαλοῦν μεγάλα κρατήσῃ.* To this period he then refers the celebrated passage, 2 Thess. ii. 7—9. and Matt. xxiv. 14.

† Theodoret on the Septuagint of this passage: “*Ἔως ἑσπέρας καὶ πρωῆς, ἡμέραι δισχιλίαι καὶ τριακόσιαι, κ. τ. λ. Ἑσπέραν δὲ ἐκάλεσε τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν στυφορῶν, πρωῆ δὲ, τὸ τέλος τῶν στυφορῶν. ἐπειδὴ νυκτὶ καὶ σκότῳ ἴσκει τὰ λυπηρὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν φησὶ, τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν κακῶν, ἕως τέλους τοσὸς δὲ ἰστὶ χρόνος.*” This period, he goes on to say, makes, according to the Hebrew method of computation, six years and six months, the time during which the calamities of the Jews continued. I doubt the soundness of this result.

phetical week, and continuing to *its* end. Then again, at verse 26, we are assured, that the vision respecting the period termed the *evening* and *morning* is certain, which however is to be closed for many days. This period is mentioned again in Zechariah (chap. xiv. 6, 7), and is there termed *a day*: “*And it shall come to pass in THAT DAY,*” it is said, “*that the light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be ONE DAY which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.*” See the whole context (comp. 2 Peter, iii. &c. and, above, on Rev. xx.)*

In Dan. xi. 30—35,† this whole period is again alluded to, but in different terms: it is there styled “*the time of the end,*” and “*a time appointed.*” At ver. 31, the pollution of the sanctuary, and the end of the daily sacrifice, with the abomination of desolation, are predicted, which our Lord himself has limited, as already remarked. The exploits of the true disciples are then alluded to, with their general preaching, persecutions, the fall of some, &c., and this is closed by mentioning the time of the end. Chap. xii. commences with an obvious prediction of the troubles of these times; and this has been cited by our Lord, and limited to this very period (Matt. xxiv. 21, &c.): see also ver. 3 and 4. At ver. 6 (Dan. xii.) the question is asked, How long shall it be to the end of the wonders thus commenced? The answer is (ver. 7), *a time, times, and a half; i. e.* the latter half of this period, and then the end cometh. The vision (ver. 9) is then closed up and sealed till *the time of the end*; and in this period, St. John assures us, in the Apocalypse (see above), the Lamb opens it. Then at ver. 11, a period of one thousand two hundred and ninety days, about three years and a half; *i. e.* the latter half of this prophetic week, is marked as the duration of time intervening from the taking away of the sacrifice to the end or consummation: and happy is he, it is

* This whole chapter of Zechariah is likewise applied by Theodoret to the apostolic and immediately subsequent times; and very justly, as I think. See also Micah, iii. 6—12.

† This, Theodoret, with many of the Fathers, applies, erroneously, as I believe, to the times of the Maccabees. He seems to think, however, that it will apply better to the times of the Gospel; and appeals accordingly to our Lord’s prophecy (Matt. xxiv.): and then tells us, that Antiochus Epiphanes was a type of Antichrist: but this involves a doctrine which I cannot allow.

added, "*who waiteth*," perseveres (so Rev. i. 3 ; ii. 10 ; iii. 12, &c.), so as to outlive this period of trial, and to see that in which kings and queens shall become the nursing fathers and nursing mothers of Christ's Church. At this period, however (ver. 13), the prophet shall be enjoying his rest in the heavenly Canaan, the true lot of his inheritance ; or, it may mean, that at this period, his predictions shall find their application and fulfilment.

Let us now see how these *symbolical* (not mathematical) periods will answer to those mentioned in the book of the Revelation. In chap. ix. 5—10, a period of *five months* is mentioned ; and, as this manifestly belongs to the *last times* so frequently spoken of in Scripture (as shewn in the exposition on this place), all we can say is, that, as it exceeds the number three and a half, usually given to designate each half of the last week of the times of the end, it was, perhaps, as noticed in a similar case in Daniel (viii. 13, 14), intended to intimate a space of time considerably longer than this ; in which great troubles were brought upon this people by their subjugation to the Romans, before the daily sacrifice had been taken away ; such, for example, as were experienced under the administrations of Varus, Pilate, &c., to the times of Florus, as mentioned by Josephus.*

In chap. xi. 2, a period of *forty-two months* is assigned for the trampling down of the holy city ; that is, when reduced to years, about three and a half, corresponding with the one thousand two hundred and ninety days of Daniel. If we turn to Luke, xxi. 24, we shall find this period alluded to ; and there, just as in Daniel, we learn that it is to take place immediately after the desolation of the sanctuary ; and, therefore, must belong to the latter half of this prophetic week of Daniel. Again, in ver. 3, we are told that Christ shall give power to his two witnesses (the Law and the Gospel perhaps), and that they shall prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. That this period is not that mentioned by Daniel, and said to consist of one thousand two hundred and ninety days, will appear from the following considerations. First, the number is not the same, but somewhat smaller ; secondly, we are informed

* Wars of the Jews, book ii. chap. iii.—xvii. &c.

(ver. 7) that the testimony given during this period shall be finished ; and again, at ver. 9, that these witnesses shall be considered as dead during another period of *three days and a half*. During the first half, then (or thereabouts), of this prophetic week, they shall give their testimony in sack-cloth ; and, during the last, they shall be considered as completely destroyed. Then, in ver. 11 — 13, after the expiration of the last three days and a half, the victory of the Church, or revival of these two witnesses, with their safe lodgment under the providence of God (in the Church) is stated. The calamities of their enemies are then foretold ; and the chapter concludes with the song of triumph.

The first of these periods, then, I take to be the *Evangelical millennium* ;* for in this (see ver. 5, 6,) the miraculous powers then, and then only, possessed by the Church, are earnestly and pointedly dwelt upon by St. John : “ *If any man will* (is willing, θέλη ἀδικῆσαι, to) *hurt them* (rather to convict them of injustice, which our Lord had declared should not be done : οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ, the very words used by St. John), *fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies, &c.*” i. e. they shall denounce them as destroyed by fire : this is repeated, in order to give the relation the greater em-

* We have in Justin Martyr : ‘Ο καὶ ἡμᾶς διὰ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς σταυρωθεὶς καὶ ἀποθανὼν ἀνέστη, καὶ ἘΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣΕΝ ἀνεληθῶν εἰς οὐρανόν· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς παρ’ αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἐν τοῖς πάσιν ἔθνεσιν κηρυχθεῖσιν εὐφροσύνη ἐστὶ προσδοκῶντων τὴν κατηγγελμένην ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἀφθαρσίαν.—*Apol.* p. 82. See also pp. 88, 89. It should be carefully borne in mind, that the establishment of Christ’s kingdom had been the subject of prophecy from the earliest periods of time ; that John’s preaching went only to the point that it was *at hand* ; that our Lord’s preaching generally extended to the enunciation of its *spiritual character* ; and that it was reserved for the Apostles to establish it throughout the world ; which they did without any considerable opposition, except what they experienced from the Jews. To them, therefore, was *the kingdom* given ; and they may be truly said to have sat upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence the terms *gospel of the kingdom, kingdom of heaven, &c.* See Matt. iv. 23 ; viii. 12 ; ix. 35 ; xiii. 38, 43 ; xxi. 43. Mark, iv. 11, 26 ; ix. 1. Luke, vi. 20 ; ix. 27 ; xii. 32 ; xxii. 29, 30. Rom. xiv. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 20. Col. i. 13 ; iv. 11. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 28. James, ii. 5. 2 Peter, i. 11. The words of Eusebius on this subject are remarkable : “ *Qualem quantumque gloriam simul ac libertatem doctrina veræ erga supremum Deum pietatis a Christo primum hominibus annuntiata, apud omnes Græcos pariter et Barbaros ante persecutionem nostra memoria excitata consecuta sit, nos certe pro merito explicare non possumus. Argumento esse possit imperatorum benignitas erga nostros,*” &c.—*Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. 1. And a

phasis. Similar denunciations occur in the next verse, which appear manifestly to allude to our Lord's words, Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18—20. This view of the subject seems to be established, from the declaration of the third verse; viz.: "*I (Christ) will GIVE POWER unto my two witnesses,*" the Law and the Gospel: by a metonymy for, *the preachers* of those parts of Revelation, which conspired to bear testimony to me. If it be objected, that in so glorious a time as the millennium is predicted to be, to prophesy in *sackcloth* would involve an incongruity; I answer: Let it be remembered, the good news of this kingdom is *purely spiritual*;* that those who wear *soft clothing* are to be found in the houses of temporal kings only; and, that *this kingdom* ever takes its commencement, and secures its establishment, principally in the exercise of repentance and faith; and of the first of these, sackcloth was the usual mark. Our Lord's kingdom too was ushered in and reared in a remarkable degree, by calling men to repentance and to faith. (See Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17. Mark, i. 15; vi. 12. Luke, xiii. 3. So by the Apostles, during this very period: Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; 17, 30; xxvi. 20, &c.) We have no incongruity, therefore, in

little lower down: "*Jam vero quis innumerabilem hominum quotidie ad fidem Christi confugientium turbam, quis numerum ecclesiarum in singulis urbibus, quis illustres populorum concursus in ædibus sacris cumulate possit describere?*" Tertullian ascribed the success of the Gospel in these times to the power of God alone (see the Bishop of Lincoln's book, p. 94); while Mosheim endeavours to account for it by appealing to the learning of its apologists, and the circulation of translations of the Scriptures (*ib.* p. 113). That these were means well calculated to further this great object, there can be no doubt; but the real cause of the success is, certainly, that mentioned by Tertullian: and this Eusebius, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, lib. iii. sect. 1, affirms was the case, which he proves from the prophets.

* Compare Luke, xii. 32; xxii. 24—30, &c. The testimony of Arnobius, a writer who lived near these times, will perhaps be allowed to have weight on this point. "*Nihil enim est nobis,*" says he, "*promissum ad hanc vitam; nec in carunculæ hujus folliculo constitutis, opis aliquid sponsum est, auxiliique decretum: quinimo edocti sumus minas omnes, quæcumque sunt, parvi ducere. . . . Itaque ista, quam dicitis persecutionis asperitas, liberatio nostra est, non persecutio: nec pœnam vexatio inferet, sed ad lucem libertatis educet,*" &c. Lib. ii. prope finem. And Justin Martyr much earlier: . . . Εἰ γὰρ ἀνδρώπινον βασιλείαν προσδοκῶμεν, καὶ ἡρνούμεθα, ὅπως μὴ ἀναιρούμεθα, καὶ λανθάνειν ἐπιειρώμεθα, ὅπως τῶν προσδοκωμένων τύχωμεν· ἀλλὰ ἵπτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ νῦν πᾶς ἐλπίδας ἔχομεν, ἀναιρούντων οὐ πεφροντίκαμεν. Apol. pp. 18, 19.

our spiritual kings and priests being clothed in sackcloth, nor, it may be added, in their being covered with ashes; because their glory consisted not in externals; their riches, strength, perseverance, success, stood in a power communicated to the soul purely by the influence of a Spirit, which the world neither seeth nor can see: and, happy would it have been for millions, if their crown of rejoicing here had never been worn with other garments and adornings than those of sackcloth and ashes. Besides, this phraseology harmonises perfectly with that language of the New Testament which belongs to this period.

With regard to the latter of these two periods (ver. 8—10), it corresponds, in all its parts, so exactly with that in which Satan is said to have been let loose, that it appears to me impossible to avoid the conviction that this period must have been meant. In the first place, it is said, ver. 7: “*The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and (apparently) kill them*” (see Rev. xiii. 7, 8; xx. 7—9): where we have relations perfectly parallel; and in the first, the period of his confinement, is termed *a thousand years*. Now, if we turn back to chap. xiii. 4, we shall find the victory ascribed to the beast, during, as I suppose, the period of his liberty; “Who,” it is said, “is able to make war with him?” Some of the saints have been slain (the witnesses are thought to be dead); and here the victory is, accordingly, assumed. At ver. 5 (chap. xiii.), however, this power, &c., we are told, is to continue no longer than *forty-two months, i. e.* the prophetic years or days, three and a half, as mentioned before: and this is manifestly the latter half of the period predicted. It has already been remarked, that St. Peter, speaking of the first period (or millennium, according to my view), mentions *a day*, in allusion perhaps to a passage in Zechariah (xiv. 6, 7), as well as to another in Psalm xl. 4; both of which can be shewn, I think, to allude to none but this period. That the context of St. Peter belongs to it, it is impossible to doubt; and, from his phraseology, it is equally impossible to suppose, that he intended to be understood as speaking of a strict chronological period. The passage in the Revelations is, beyond all doubt (with me at least), an allusion to this place in St. Peter; because, it must fall in the very same

period: and, if this be the case, it must also be identical with *the day* mentioned by Zechariah, and the *generation* marked by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 14, 34), at the expiration of which the general persecutions were to commence, but during which his disciples should enjoy the kingdom, and judge the tribes of Israel. Again, in Rev. xii. 6, we have another allusion to the *latter* period of persecution; and there it is limited in continuance to one thousand two hundred and sixty days (the period of three and a half prophetic years, or one half of the week of Daniel): and here, ver. 7—9, the Destroyer is cast out. In ver. 12—17, this period is denominated short, and is measured ver. 14 by *a time, times, and half a time*; i. e. the number three and a half, as before. In Rev. xx. 3, this period is said to be a *little season*; whence I think we may conclude, that these periods must have been intended to be considered as identical.* It would be almost endless to cite all the instances quoted from the Prophets, and explained by the Evangelists and Apostles, as relating to these times, or alluded to in this book: some of them have already been adduced, and in number sufficiently great, it is believed, to identify the predictions with the allusions made to them, and the periods limited for their fulfilment in the less involved declarations of the New Testament. One circumstance more we may notice here; and, as this is one of great importance in our inquiry, we shall the more readily be excused in doing this.

In the predictions made by Daniel, and indeed by all the prophets, the *end, times of the end, latter days, last days, the end of the world*, and the like, are constantly adverted to:† and, from other places we learn, that from this period whenever it should happen, another termed *the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of the saints, a new heaven, new Jerusalem*, &c. should commence; and that this state of things should continue for ever.‡ In Dan. vii. 26, 27, these two

* If it be objected, that these periods bear no just proportion in their continuance to those laid down by Daniel, my answer will be: If the Prophet did not intend them to mark strict chronological periods, there can be no probability that he intended they should be mathematically proportional.

† See the remarks offered on this phraseology at p. 56, &c. of this work.

‡ The Apostolic Fathers speak unanimously of the kingdom of Christ, or

circumstances are closely linked together and determined ; so much so that they seem inseparable : and, as the times of the tyranny of the last empire, of *the end*, &c. have been so precisely determined by our Lord, no doubt ought to remain that the commencement of the new empire has also been so determined. See chap. viii. 24—26 ; ix. 26, 27 ; xi. 30—35 ; xii. 6—13 ; compare with Matt. xxiv. 3—14, 15—34. Luke, i. 33, &c.

We now proceed to notice a few of those predictions on this subject which have been limited in the New Testament ; and then to endeavour to determine the limits of some others which have not been there determined. In Acts, ii. 16—36, we have two prophecies,—one of Joel, and another of David,—applied to the apostolic age, which is there (ver. 17) termed *the last days* (in Joel אַחֲרֵי כֵן, *afterwards thus*). Now, I would only entreat the reader to consider in how many instances this prophecy has been enounced and applied both in the Old and New Testament, not excepting the Book of Revelation, and carefully to note whether it does not, in every case, apply to the same period, and to the very same particulars. In like manner let the

of heaven, as having been established *throughout the world* in the times of the Apostles. Those of a later date join them in this, but reserve the times of the millennium to some period still future, in which Antichrist, of whom they seem to have entertained very vague notions, was to be destroyed. So Justin Martyr, speaking of the conversions made to Christ in his days, says: καὶ εὐχόμεαι κατὰ ΠΑΝ ΓΕΝΟΣ ἀνθρώπων τοιοῦτους δεῖξαι· τὴν γὰρ καὶ λέγομεν τὸ ἀναρίθμητον πλῆθος τῶν ἐξ ἀπολασίας μεταβαλόντων, καὶ ταῦτα μαθόντων.—*Apol.* p. 28. And Ephræm Syrus on Dan. xii. 9: “Sermones clausi signatique, alii pertinebant ad regnum statuto tempore casurum, quodque prædictum fuerat a Christo evertendum ; alii ad ipsum Christum ejusdem eversorem.” And on chap. ii. 34, 35 : . . . “*Lapis excisus sine manibus*, Dominus est . . . de stirpe videlicet Abrahami natus . . . *Et implevit universam terram*. Quod ad evangelii promulgationem referendum est, per quam Christi imperium in *omnes mundi partes* celerrime propagatum est.” And again on chap. vii. 14 : “Prophetia tamen in Domino consummata est ; ipsi namque data est potestas et imperium in *omnes populos*, nationes, et linguas juxta illud : *Datu est mihi*, &c. Matt. xxviii. 18. Philip. ii. 10. Luc. i. 33.” Tertullian’s testimony to this effect will be found in the Bishop of Lincoln’s work, pp. 91—4. And it is a fact worthy of remark, and noticed by Eusebius as such (compare Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 37, with lib. iv. capp. 7, 22), that during the apostolic age, and for some time after, heresy, which he ascribes to the immediate agency of Satan, made no considerable progress.

other prediction be examined (ver. 25, &c.), and carefully let the bearings of the passages alluded to be observed. In Acts, iii. 24, we are told, that all the prophets have foretold *of these days*; a circumstance difficult to be accounted for on any other view of the prophecies.

In 1 Cor. x. 1—11, we are instructed, that Christ followed the Israelites in the wilderness, &c.; and then it is added: “*All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME*” (τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντησαν). Again, Heb. i. 1, 2: “*God, who at sundry times . . . spake by the prophets, hath in THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by his Son.*” And *ib.* ix. 26: “*Now once in THE END OF THE WORLD hath He appeared to put away sin.*” 1 John, ii. 18: “*It is THE LAST TIME: . . . we know that it is THE LAST TIME.*” That the apostolic times are meant by these expressions, it is impossible to doubt;* and that some of the passages here adduced have been appealed to by the author of the book of the Revelation, is equally clear.

The following are a few passages which seem also to relate to this period. Gen. xlix. 1, 8—12. Comp. Deut. iv. 30. xxxi. 29. xxxiii. 7; Num. xxiv. 14, 17; Dan. ii. 28. x. 14, &c.; Hos. iii. 5. So also Is. ii. 2; Micah, iv. 1; Zechariah, xiv. 1—11; Malachi, iv. 1—6, compared with their several parallels. To these very many others may be added, which, if they relate to the apostolic times, and to those parallel places found in the book of the Revelation, will afford us a chain of evidence identifying the fulfilment of the visions there given, which must be irresistible.

Another question may now be raised; but on this we shall not say much; viz. Whether any particular prophecies still remain unfulfilled? I believe there are none; for these reasons: 1st. The expressions of Scripture intimate that at

* Some have supposed, by a very lax method of interpretation, that *any* of the times of the Christian dispensation may be meant by this phraseology. We have an *end*, or *completion*, here had in view; we have, moreover, predicted, the establishment of a new heaven and earth,—a new kingdom, which is never to end. That this signifies the last dispensation, there can be no doubt; but how it can be called the *end*, the *time* of the end, or the like, I am at a loss to discover, particularly as the time of the prophetic *end* has so exactly been determined in the New Testament.

this end of time, days, &c. *vision* and *prophecy* should be sealed, or cease (Dan. ix. 24).^{*} And again, Luke, xviii. 31. xxi. 22, “*For these be the days of vengeance, that ALL THINGS which are written may be fulfilled.*” Ib. xxii. 37. xxiv. 25—27, 44; Acts, iii. 21—26; Rom. xv. 4; 1 Cor. x. 11. xiii. 8; Rev. x. 6, 7. xvi. 17. “*It is done,*” xxi. 1—6. And 2dly. I know of no such prophecies occurring in the sacred volume. *General prophecy*, indeed, stands now there in all its primitive extent and force; but of that which relates to *particular events*, I cannot find so much as a jot or tittle unfulfilled. There is, however, one often cited as decisive to the contrary, viz. Is. xi. 9: “*The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*” See also Hab. ii. 14. I must remark here, that the chapter in which this is found manifestly refers to the times of our Lord and his Apostles, and that it has been so applied by inspired authority:† see Rom. xv. 10, 12, &c. And if this

^{*} We have in our version, “*the vision and prophecy;*” which is incorrect; for in the original no definite article is attached to either of these words. The passage stands thus: וְלִהְיוֹתָם חֶזֶן וְנִבְיָא, *to seal (or finish) vision and prophet.* The translators seem to have been led astray here by attending to a similar passage in chap. xii. 9. But there, *the words* are sealed to the time of the end: here we are told what is to come to pass *at* that time: in that case, too, we have the definite article regularly affixed (הַחֶזֶן), but in this we have not. So Theodoret on the place: Σφραγίσαι ὅρασιν καὶ προφητήν, τουτέστι, τοῦ δοῦναι μὲν τέλος ἈΠΑΣΑΙΣ ΤΑΙΣ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑΙΣ· τέλος γὰρ, κ. τ. λ. (Rom. x. 4.) παῦσαι δὲ λοιπὸν τὴν προφητικὴν χάριν ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους.... πληροὶ τοίνυν, καὶ οἷον ἐσφραγίζει, καὶ ἐμβαίνει τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν προφητῶν προῤῥηθέντα, ποιῶν ἅπαντα καὶ πάσχων τὰ ὑπ’ ἐκείνων χρησμοδωθέντα. So also Ephræm Syrus on the passage, and Tertullian adversus Judæos, who held the same opinion. I may now offer a remark on the words, “*And to anoint the most holy.*” This, as it stands, is ambiguous; it may signify either the most holy person, or thing: our translators seem to have understood *the most holy person*, i. e. of Christ; while the original clearly intimates *the most holy thing* (הַדָּשׁ הַקָּדוֹשׁ), or *holy of holies*, i. e. the sanctuary. Now, if the Jewish temple was to have an end, or rather to be perpetuated under the new form of the Christian Church, this prediction must relate to the Church, and not to the old sanctuary; and if so, it had its fulfilment in the unction first given on the day of Pentecost.

† The HOLY mountain mentioned in this verse is identified by Theodoret with the Rock upon which Christ’s Church is said to be built, see Matt. xvi. 18. “Εοικεν ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ φωνὴ τοῦ Κυρίου· ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κ. τ. λ. ὅρος τοίνυν ἅγιον τὸ ὑψηλὸν καὶ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ ἀκίνητον τῆς θείας

be the case, which I think is undeniable, any opinion we may have to offer on the supposed inadequacy of such fulfilment, must stand for nothing. “*All Israel shall be saved,*” (Rom. xi. 26), is another, which, however, cannot be taken in its fullest extent, unless we suppose, what is contrary to the analogy of Scripture, that at some period there shall not remain so much as one infidel among the posterity of Jacob; and if so, only a part or a remnant can be saved. If, however, we examine the passages to which St. Paul here refers, we shall find that they speak, beyond all possible doubt, of the *remnant* to be saved in his days, and not to those of any other period; for that, according to Scriptural phraseology, contained *all Israel*: others refusing to receive the Gospel being neither the true descendants of Abraham nor of Israel, nor even Jews, in the just sense of those terms. But, suppose we allow the Apostle meant, that still greater numbers of the descendants of Jacob should, after the calling in of the Gentiles, receive the faith of Christ, what must our conclusion now be? Must it not, that they, together with the heathen, of whom they really form a part (the Scripture positively declaring that the covenant has been broken, and that they are not a people), shall with them receive the faith of Christ? That a vast majority of the present infidel world, whether Jew or not, will yet receive the Gospel, there is every reason to hope and to trust; and certainly the strongest grounds to warrant every effort that can be made for that purpose, in the single commandment, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,” &c. The system is now universal; and it is therefore generally pro-

διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ καλεῖ, καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ τούτου ἐστῶσι τὸ ἀκαταγώνιστον ἐπαγγέλλεται. “Ὅτι ἐνεπλήσθη, κ. τ. λ. Δείκνυσιν οὖν τὴν τοῦ κηρύγματος δύναμιν, ὅτι ἐνεπλήσθη λέγων ἢ σύμπασα γῆ τοῦ γινῶναι τὸν Κύριον, ὡς ὕδωρ πολὺ καλύψαι θαλάσσας. μέγιστον δὲ ἀληθῶς, καὶ παραδοξότατον θαῦμα· καὶ ὅμοι ψεκᾶσιν ὀλίγαις ἐπιφειρομέναις θαλάττῃ, καὶ τὴν ἐν ταύτῃ μεταβαλλούσαις πικρίαν, καὶ γλυκεῖαν ἐργαζομέναις τὴν ταύτης ποιότητα· οὕτως γὰρ ὁ εὐαγγελικὸς λόγος κατέπαυσε μὲν τὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀσέβειαν, ΠΑΣΑΝ ΔΕ ΓῆΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΑΛΑΤΤΑΝ ΘΕΟΓΝΩΣΙΑΣ ΕΠΛΗΡΩΣΕΝ. The exquisite beauty and soundness of this extract must excuse its length. So Ignatius: “... Bishops appointed . . . unto the utmost bounds of the earth.” (Edit. 1710, p. 65). And so Justin Martyr, Apol. p. 76 (ed. 1700); the Bishop of Lincoln’s work on Tertullian, pp. 91—96; Euseb. Dem. Evang. lib. ii. cap. 4, § xli.; and the Fathers generally.

mised, that "whosoever shall give to drink . . . a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple . . . shall in no wise lose his reward." And I may conclude, that where a single command and a single promise, such as these are, will fail to produce the desired effect, it may reasonably be doubted whether efforts made and carried on under speculative notions on prophecy generally, will either be attended by the co-operating influences of Christ, or finally secure the blessings had in view.

THE END.

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